

PLUCK AND LUCK

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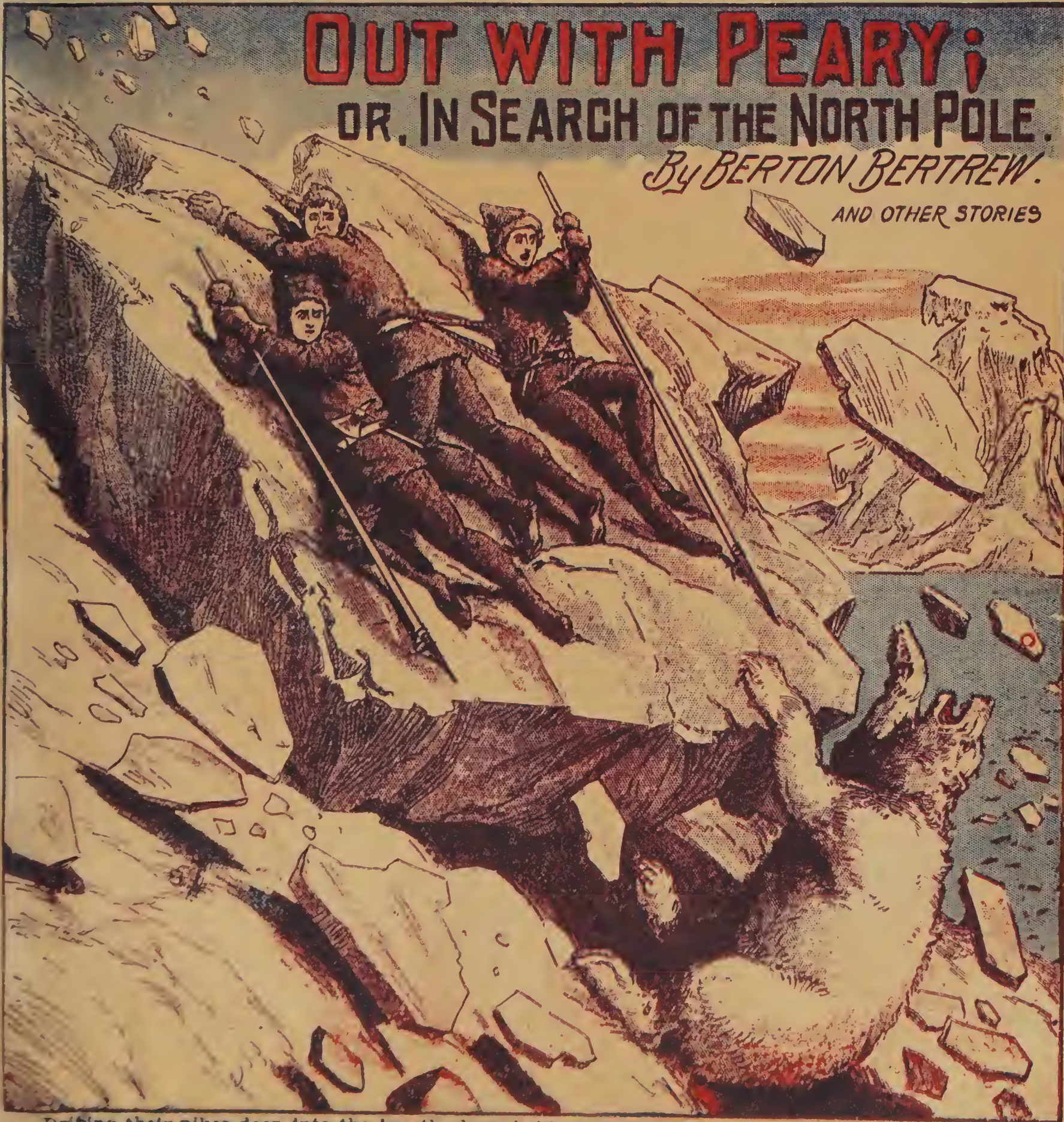
NEW YORK, JUNE 2, 1920.

Price 7 Cents

OUT WITH PEARY; OR, IN SEARCH OF THE NORTH POLE.

By BERTON BERTREW.

AND OTHER STORIES



Driving their pikes deep into the ice, the boys held on with both hands and feet. Down the glittering slope rushed the huge block of ice. The bear was directly in its path and there was no escape.

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OUT WITH PEARY

Or, IN SEARCH OF THE NORTH POLE

BY BERTON BERTREW.

CHAPTER I.—A Polar Bear Adventure.

"Look out, Bert! He's coming your way!"

"I'm all right, Tom, but I wish I had my rifle here. I'd soon——"

"Look out, Fred, there he is, coming around that big ice hummock."

"All right, Tom, I'll take care of him."

Three young men, all in furs and carrying pikes, were making their way across a desert of snow and ice. They were suddenly surprised by the appearance of an enormous polar bear right in their path. The ice mounds had hidden the great beast from them until they were almost upon him. They retreated hastily, taking care to keep some of the thickly strewn ice blocks between themselves and their foe.

"We shouldn't have left the vessel without our rifles," said Tom Cole; "but it's too late now to think of that."

"We can do something with our pikes, at all events," muttered Bert Warner, Tom's particular chum.

"The best thing we can do is to get back to the Kite as soon as possible, and give this fellow the slip," added Fred Gordon, the third member of the party.

The three boys were a part of the crew of the steam whaler Kite, under the command of Lieut. Robert E. Peary, of the United States navy, then on an exploring expedition to the north. The object of the expedition was to explore the coast of Greenland, but it was well known that if there were any chance of reaching the pole without endangering the lives of his men, the gallant lieutenant would do so. The ship was then lying in a sheltered cove on the west coast of Greenland, some miles above Melville Sound, and the three boys had been sent to examine the shore a half mile or so distant, and see if there were any changes in the ice pack which had temporarily shut the little vessel in the cove. While making their way to a certain headland they had observed, they had suddenly come upon the bear, whose savage appearance made them forget everything except their own safety. Making their way from one hummock to another and keeping the ice always between themselves and the bear, they hoped to be able to soon reach the ship, or at least within sight of those on board. The three boys dashed off toward the open in hot haste, at first gaining considerably on the bear. Crack! There was a sudden break in the ice which showed a great seam right across the path.

"This way!" cried Tom, darting off at right angles toward a great mound not far away.

Crack! The ice was breaking again, probably owing to a change in the wind.

"We must reach either the shore or the ship before the ice breaks up," muttered Tom.

"Thought we were on shore all the time," said Bert.

The boys were running at full speed across the now level ice, the bear being in hot pursuit. In front of them lay the great mound of ice, probably a grounded iceberg, and toward this they hastened. Once upon it they could more easily elude their savage foe. Tom urged his companions forward, remaining in the rear to cover their retreat. Bert had no pike to defend himself with, nor to aid him in climbing, and therefore Tom wished to give him all the advantage he could. Crack! A huge seam opened in the ice just behind where the boys had passed. The bear was cut off from them for a time, and they were safe. Then Tom made a startling discovery. He had imagined that they were going toward the Kite. Instead of that, they were leaving the vessel farther behind every minute. The cracks in the ice would prevent them from returning, even if the bear were not present. Crack!

"Hurry, hurry!" cried Tom. "The berg is the only safe place if the ice breaks up."

They made all haste and reached the berg, scrambling up one of its sides where there were plenty of jagged edges to cling to, finally reaching a broad ledge far above the level of the ice. Here they sat down and gazed about them. The bear was nowhere in sight. They could see the vessel in the distance, riding safely at anchor. From their elevated position on the berg the boys could obtain a good view of the coast. To the north they beheld a black headland, and they took especial notice of it.

"There must be a good shelter in the lee of that rock," said Tom, "and we may have to take advantage of it some day."

Crack! The berg seemed to have been suddenly agitated to its very center.

"The berg is turning over!" cried Tom.

Then he drove his pike into the ice and braced himself firmly on both feet. Fred did the same, just as there came a more violent movement of the ice. Tom and Fred were suddenly thrown upon their backs. Bert fell forward upon his face between the two. Then a most extraordinary event happened. The berg was not turning over, as sometimes happened. Instead, a large block of many tons in weight had suddenly detached itself from the main body. This block, supporting the three boys, began to rush with terrible impetuosity down the slope. Driving

their spikes deep into the ice, the boys held on with both hands and feet.

CHAPTER II.—Entombed in An Iceberg.

Down the icy slope toward almost certain destruction rushed the three boys, borne by the giant block of ice. Suddenly, as it seemed about to dart forward on its last stage toward the open water, it struck an obstruction. A small hummock of ice not more than a foot high opposed its progress. Had it been larger, it must have caused the destruction of the block. It was ground to powder instantly, but it swerved the block from its course. The latter swung around at an angle and glided off upon level ice. It presently ran into a mass of snow and soft ice, which it ground into slivers. Then there was a sudden violent upheaval, accompanied by a series of explosions like pistol reports. The boys were thrown down, the block seeming to go all to pieces. When they picked themselves up they found that they were afloat. A large section of the berg had been broken off, and upon this they were now floating. They drifted rapidly away from the main body of ice, having evidently been caught by the current. This was taking them away from the Kite.

"We're off on a voyage of our own," said Tom.

"And without instructions from Peary," added Bert.

"I am afraid Peary has seen the last of us, and we of him," murmured Fred. "We have escaped one peril only to run into another."

"We may escape that also," said Tom hopefully. "Don't give up the ship, boys."

All this time the current was bearing them further and further from the ship. At last, when it felt as if hours had passed, they felt a sudden but not violent shock, and the ice raft came to a stop. The berg had grounded; but whether on shore or among the floes, they could not tell. It remained stationary, however, and Tom became satisfied that their journey was at an end. The fog still hung thick and black all around them, and they did not dare to leave one another.

"It is growing colder," said Tom, after a long pause.

"And the fog is lifting," added Bert.

Slowly the clouds of fog melted away, and the boys discovered that they had grounded next to the shore ice. The shore was less than half a mile distant, and, far away, could be seen the black headland they had first noticed. Before long the fog had all disappeared, the air growing colder every minute. A dull, leaden sky hung above them, and before long flakes of snow began to fall. These soon increased in size and number, and in a short time the air was full of the white particles.

"Well, our position does not seem to have improved any," said Tom; "but it might be worse."

The snow began soon to fall in blinding sheets, and to attempt to make one's way back to the Kite now would have been madness.

Tom found a place in the lee of a great pillar of ice in the center of the berg, and here he and his companions went to escape the fury of the storm. The snow drifted deep on three sides of them, forming a sheltered nook against the pillar,

where they were in comparative comfort. Higher and higher piled the drifts, cutting off the wind, and then Tom found an opening in the ice pillar that he had not at first seen.

"It must be a screw," he said, "and we will have to be careful; but at any rate there seems to be room enough."

Pushing his way through the opening, Tom found a cavern or room within the berg, twelve or fifteen feet long and higher than his head.

"Here we are, as snug as can be," he said to his companions, who now entered. "We are out of the wind, the place is warm, and there is no reason why we cannot take our comfort till the storm is over."

They were warm and sheltered from the snow, and one by one they dropped to sleep, leaving no one on guard, while the snow drifted thick and white all about their novel hiding-place, blocking the entrance and piling itself up in one level mass. After having slept several hours, it being then much lighter in the cave, Tom awoke and went to the entrance. He found it blocked with snow, and push as he would, he was unable to break down the barrier.

"Well, what one can't do three may," he muttered, as he gave up the task. "Hallo, boys, it is time to get out!"

"What's the matter?" cried Bert.

"We are blocked in with the snow," answered Tom, "that's all."

"Has the storm ceased?"

"I don't know. I can't get out."

"Oh, that's it? Well, let me help."

With their pikes the boys succeeded in loosening a good deal of the snow, and managed to dig a passage about three feet long, but beyond that it seemed impossible to go. Fred Gordon awoke and joined them in their work, for all felt the necessity of leaving the cave.

"It's no use," muttered Fred, at last. "This is not snow that we see; it is ice. A part of the upper portion of the berg has fallen, and we are prisoners."

"Then let us dig our way out of prison," said Tom.

They both worked till they were tired, and then Fred took one of the pikes. Although he considered the task nearly hopeless, he would not stand idly by and see his companions work while he did nothing. Presently, in dealing a harder blow than usual, his pike flew out of his hand and disappeared.

"Just my luck!" he muttered.

A current of cold air suddenly entered the cave.

"Not so bad, my boy," said Tom. "You have penetrated the wall, at all events."

CHAPTER III.—A Moment of Peril.

Then there came an awful crash. The whole ice pillar seemed to be going to pieces. The entire wall fell away, crashing outward. In an instant the boys dashed out into the open air, fearing to be crushed by the falling ice. The berg now began to rock violently, a crack appeared along one side, and great jets of water spouted up. When they arose they found themselves once more adrift. In an instant the boys were thrown flat upon their faces. They were

floating upon a mass of ice not more than twenty feet square and scarcely half that in thickness. The current soon caught it and sent it whirling out in midstream. Here and there were floating or grounded bergs, and one of the latter lay right within the course they were taking. If the cake they were on came in collision with the berg, nothing could save them. The current ran like a millrace, and to be thrown into that icy stream was an event to be dreaded. On swept the cake straight for the grounded berg, whose precipitous sides offered no chance for making a hasty landing. Suddenly, as they seemed about to strike, and Tom had seized his pike in readiness to ward off, an eddy caught them and whirled them off at a sharp angle, causing them to just escape a collision.

In a few moments they had rounded the perpendicular face of the berg, and beheld a ledge, twenty feet wide, sloping gradually down to the water's edge. In another instant they had grounded upon a part of the berg under water.

"Jump!" roared Tom, obeying his own injunction.

The three boys threw themselves forward upon the ledge just as the cake of ice split in a dozen pieces and went floating away with the current. Picking themselves up, the boys made their way along the ledge, around a hummock, across another level space, over two or three more mounds, and then around a huge mass which towered many hundreds of feet above them. Here they made a fortunate discovery. The berg had grounded close to the shore, and already an ice bridge had formed which would enable them to reach the solid land.

"Wait a moment!" cried Tom. "We must first take an observation and see if we cannot discover the whereabouts of the Kite."

Then, pike in hand, he slowly ascended the great mound of ice, making his way upward with the utmost caution until he had reached a height of thirty or forty feet above the level. Here he found a ledge wide enough to stand upon, extending fully twenty-five feet. Making his way slowly along this and scanning the horizon with the utmost care, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Hurrah! I see them!"

"The ship?"

"Yes; and better yet."

"What's that?"

"A large party, in sledges and on foot, coming to our rescue."

"Good!"

"Then we are in luck."

"If I only had something to hail them with."

"Well, wait. They'll see us before long."

Taking his fur cap and sticking it on the end of the pike, Tom clutched a projecting point of ice with his left hand and waved his signal high above his head with his right.

"Do they see it?"

"I don't know. I can't tell yet."

"Can't you shout?"

"Yes. Hallo, hal-lo, hal-loo-oo!"

In a few moments there was an answering shout.

"They hear you!" cried Bert.

"That's only an echo," murmured Fred dolefully, "from the headland we saw."

Tom shouted again, and in a few moments there came an answer as before.

Then, as if in refutation of Fred's discouraging statement, there was a puff of white smoke and a little later a report.

"They see me! They have answered!" cried Tom, waving his signal more frantically.

In a few moments there came another puff of smoke, followed by a report louder than before.

"It's all right!" cried Tom, putting on his cap and drawing it well over his head; "they see us and are coming this way."

CHAPTER IV.—An Unknown Peril

In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes they had joined the searching party, and in good time, too, for it now began to snow, lightly at first, and then more heavily. The party being a large one could keep together better than the three boys could have done, and, besides that, there were experienced men among them, and they could not go astray. They reached the Kite after an hour's hard traveling, and if the boys had not been first fortified with warm food and something strong to drink they could not have endured the tramp after their night's exposure. When the party reached the Kite and went on board, Bert noticed one of the sailors dart an angry look at Tom, and then turn away, muttering something under his breath.

"What's the matter with Jack Grounder?" mused Bert, as he hurried below. "Something seems to have disagreed with him."

"Confound the cub!" muttered the man. "I hoped that he wouldn't come back and so save me the trouble of——" And then, breaking into a low growl, he hurried aft to help secure the boat that had just been hauled on board. The snow soon began to fall with more violence, and before long it was impossible to see the length of the vessel or from the deck to the crow's-nest. Everything was made snug on deck and below all was as warm and comfortable as could be desired. While it snowed the temperature would not be too low for comfort, but the wind was very keen, and no one faced it unless it was unavoidable. The Kite was well moored, and Lieut. Peary ordered that only an anchor watch should be maintained on deck, and that this would be frequently changed. Two men only comprised the watch, and they were not only supplied with extra clothing, but given sheltered positions so that they might suffer as little inconvenience as possible.

Tom Cole was not a boy to shirk his duty; no matter how much he had previously done, and despite the fact that he had been away from the vessel all night and had been without sufficient food or shelter, he insisted upon his turn upon deck with the others. He had an opportunity to rest for two or three hours, however, before standing his watch, and then he felt equal to anything.

"Relieve the watch!" called out Boatswain Dunlap, looking in at the forecabin where Tom, Bert, and some of the others were gathered.

"I guess it's my turn now," said Tom, jumping up from his chest.

"You, my lad? Why, you don't need to stand watch after bein'——"

"That's all right, boatswain," said Tom. "I'm no worse for my night's adventures, and if I don't do something I'll get rusty."

The boatswain laughed and made no further objection, while Tom, putting on a long bearskin coat which reached nearly to his heels, and donning a big fur cap and mittens, went out to face the storm.

"Relief lookout!" he called, as he reached the deck.

"Ay, ay!" said one of the men on watch. "Good thing, too. That you, Tom? Well, keep her the way she's heading now," with a laugh.

"I think I'm likely to, Bill," laughed Tom. "Blows a living gale, doesn't it?"

"It does that, but there's a bit of shelter there by the foremast, and the rail keeps off a lot of wind. So-long, Tom. You've only half an hour of it, anyhow."

"Thank you, Bill," said Tom, crossing the deck with his head bent and his arms swinging free to steady himself.

There was another sailor on deck, but his back was turned to Tom, and then he was so muffled up that the young fellow could scarcely have recognized him, even if he had tried.

"That's lucky," muttered the man to himself. "I'd no idea that the boy would come out. It's just the sort of time to work, for everything's in favor of an accident, and no one to blame for it neither."

The man was Jack Grounder, the foremast hand whom Bert had already noticed scowling at Tom and muttering under his breath. Tom took up a position where he was protected from the wind, and as his eyes gradually became accustomed to the dim light, cast a glance up and down the deck.

"I surely can't be the only one on watch," he muttered, as he looked up and down; "or perhaps the other has not come out yet."

Then he stood in the lee of the foremast and gazed out across the masses of ice, listening for any sound that would indicate its sudden breaking up, for it was impossible to see more than a few yards beyond the rail.

"Nasty kind of weather," he muttered presently. "I don't wonder that they change the watch so often. It would be the easiest thing in the world for a fellow to freeze standing right at his post."

Then he moved away a short distance, keeping in the lee of the mast, however, and then returned, repeating this so as to keep moving. After walking back and forth a few times he stood still against the mast and looked again out over the ice. A stealthy figure crept across the deck, bending low so as to be out of the wind and so as not to be observed, as well, and made straight toward the foremast. Suddenly, as it reached this point, it straightened up and there was the sound of a hasty step and then a sound as of a blow. At that instant, impelled as if by a feeling of danger, Tom walked away from the mast toward the port rail. Then there came a dull sound as if a blow had been struck the mast.

"Ha! What's that?" cried Tom.

"Nothing," answered a muffled voice in the darkness. "Foot slipped and I fell, that's all."

"Well, look out for yourself, for a fall may mean broken bones in such a place as this."

"H'm! I'm all right," and Tom could see a figure get up and walk hurriedly aft.

"H'm! if he hadn't moved just then I'd have pinned him to the mast with my knife," muttered the man, "and it would've been an easy job to finish him after that."

"What do you say?" asked Tom.

"Nothing, only that it was a good job I didn't bang my head agin the mast and finish myself."

"Yes," said Tom, resuming his walk.

"Curse him!" hissed the other now out of hearing. "He seems to have the lives of a cat, but I'll get 'em all, never fear, Mr. Tom Cole."

CHAPTER V.—Down the Crevasse.

Tom was relieved in half an hour by Bert, and went below, where the change from the cold, cheerless deck to the warm, comfortable mess-room was indeed grateful.

"Half an hour of that sort of thing is all a fellow wants on a night like this," he muttered, as he threw aside his big coat, cap and gloves.

"Right you are, sonny," said old Bill.

After a time Bert entered, gave Tom a glance, and beckoned him to one side. Without attracting any attention, Tom arose, walked carelessly over to where Bert stood and then went to his bunk, Bert following.

"I say, Tom, see what I found in the foremast while I was on deck," said Bert. "I struck it with my hand and cut my glove."

With that the young fellow displayed the broken point of a knife, something more than an inch in length.

"You found that in the foremast?"

"Yes. You can see that it is a fresh break. Have you been hacking at the mast with your sheath-knife?"

"No, but—good heavens! that must have been the sound I heard!"

"What was it?"

"A sound as of a blow being struck upon the mast and a sharp click. I had been standing there but a moment before. One of the men was there and said that he had fallen."

"Was it Jack Grounder?" asked Bert, lowering his voice.

"I don't know. Why do you ask?"

"Because I have seen him scowling at you and muttering to himself on more than one occasion."

"Why should he wish to kill me?"

"I don't know. Have you quarreled?"

"No."

"Well, I think I'd better keep this piece of steel. I may be able to find the blade to which it belongs some day."

"Perhaps it was by an accident that the knife was broken."

"I don't think so, but—— Sh! some one is coming."

Three or four sailors approached at this moment, and among them Jack Grounder, and Bert scrutinized the latter's face sharply. The fellow returned the glance, but showed no sign of perturbation, and Bert was inclined to dismiss a suspicion that he had entertained against him.

He had slipped the bit of steel in his pocket upon the first sign of his being interrupted, and there it now lay, ready to be used, as important evidence against some one in the future. Supper was announced soon after that, and the boys had no further opportunity to speak upon the subject. Tom, indeed, soon forgot it, but not Bert, for he had determined to ferret out the mystery of the broken knife, come what would. By morning the ice barrier in front of the cave had broken, and there was a long, wide lead of clear water extending for miles. Lieutenant Peary had the Kite made ready at once, and without delay they proceeded on their way toward the north. A week later, being well up on the west coast of Greenland, the commander of the expedition determined to go ashore and explore the interior. Leaving a sufficient number of men to take care of the vessel, Peary took a large party ashore, taking sledges, a portable house, provisions, arms, ammunition, and instruments for making observations, and pushed on.

The indefatigable wife of the explorer accompanied her husband on this trip, for no danger that he braved was too great for her to share. They set out on sledges, having a number of dogs on board, and for many miles made rapid progress, the little animals being capable of great speed. At last their progress was interrupted by huge blocks of ice which made the road almost impassable. They had reached a valley between two immense hills, and although their route seemed to lie along it, there was great danger. They kept on for a mile or so, and the boys found themselves at the end of the line, as they thought, others having passed them.

"Come on," said Bert, "we are the last ones," and he hurried forward.

Tom and Bert followed, and then Grounder appeared, the boys supposing themselves to be lost. Bert was now several yards in advance and Tom and Fred had to pass through a narrow defile. When they passed out of it Grounder walked alongside Tom, Fred going ahead.

"Be careful, young fellow," said Jack to Tom. "You'd better sound every step of the way before you go ahead."

Tom struck the ice and a hollow sound was given out.

"We are over a crevasse—be very careful," said Grounder, again pausing before he spoke.

By this time the others were well in advance.

"Go on," said Grounder. "It's all right, I guess."

They proceeded a short distance when the man, reaching in front of Tom, struck the ice a sharp, solid blow with his pike. Instantly there was a crashing sound, and a great chasm yawned right at Tom's feet.

"Look out!" cried Grounder, seizing the boy, as if to drag him out of danger. At the same time he gave Tom a push forward, leaped back and struck the ice again. There was a crash, a sliding movement, a rush of snow and ice, and then the earth seemed to open, and Tom disappeared, whirling rapidly down to the depths below.

"Ha!" hissed Grounder, kneeling on the very brink of the abyss, "that disposes of you, my young friend!"

CHAPTER VI.—In Winter Quarters.

In a few moments, by making a detour and hurrying across the ice, dodging around blocks and taking short cuts where he saw them, Grounder rejoined the main party, no one having noticed his absence.

"Where's Tom?" exclaimed Bert suddenly, as he caught sight of Jack in advance.

"Ahead, isn't he?"

"Why, no; I thought he was just behind."

Both boys stopped and looked back. The road was clear for a considerable distance, but nothing was seen of Tom.

"Hallo, Tom!" called Bert.

There was no answer, and then both boys called. Suddenly there was a dull report at some distance behind him, and Bert turned around in great excitement.

"What's that?"

He could see a wreath of smoke floating off toward the west, and wondered what it meant. In a few moments he saw a puff of smoke issue from the ground, and then he heard a report.

"Ha! I have it. Tom has fallen down a crevasse and is signaling to us. Hallo, Fred!"

Then, realizing that his chum would not hear his voice at that distance, Bert discharged his rifle twice in rapid succession, and then hurried toward where he had seen the smoke. In a few moments he heard another report, and saw the puff of smoke issuing, as it were, from the ground and discharged his own piece again. Then he hurried on without waiting to see if the main party were returning, and soon came upon a long and deep fissure in the ice, showing that they had indeed been traveling over a glacier which had indeed been covered from sight, the crust having now broken. Proceeding with great caution, Bert made his way along the edge of the chasm and began to call his comrade's name.

"Hallo!" came the response presently, as if from a great depth.

"Hallo, Tom!"

"Hallo! That you, Bert?"

"Yes. Are you all right?"

"Ay, ay, but I can't get out. Hallo!"

"Yes?"

"Run back and get ropes or something."

"All right, the men are coming. I missed you, and sent Fred ahead."

Keeping not too near the edge, Bert soon reached a point where he could stand on the very brink with perfect safety, and then shouted down:

"Hallo, Tom! Do you see me?"

"Yes; you're almost above me. Do you see me?"

"No. Where are you?"

"Down here on a big ledge of ice. There's a hole just beyond, but I missed it."

At that moment Fred, Bill, the boatswain, Grounder, and Peary and his wife appeared. They hurried on and soon joined Bert.

"I've found him!" cried the latter.

"That's good," said Peary. "This man said that some one had met with an accident."

"Why, you told me that Tom was ahead!" cried Fred, turning to Grounder.

"So I thought. Isn't that Tom?" answered the man, indicating Bert.

"No; that's Bert Warner."

"Oh, I thought he was Tom. I was hurrying on to tell the lieutenant of the accident when you overtook me."

The man spoke in the most plausible manner, and Bert began to think that his estimate of the fellow must have been wrong, after all. Tom had said that Grounder had endeavored to save him, and now Peary spoke up and said:

"Yes, he came to me at once and said that one of the boys had met with an accident and asked if we would not return at once."

"Why didn't you tell me?" asked Fred. "Didn't you know I was Tom's friend?"

"Exactly; but I thought that Tom was this one. However, you waste time while your friend is below, dead perhaps, but at any rate in great danger."

Ropes were uncoiled and spliced together and let down to Tom, who was soon able to make a running noose or bowline at one end, fasten it about his body below his arms, and call out for those above to hoist away. He had not fallen so deep as Bert had supposed, and they soon had him out, safe and sound.

"You're all right now, are you, young fellow?" asked Grounder.

"Yes, thanks, and I'm obliged to you for what you did. I was afraid that you had lost your life while trying to save mine."

Bert looked on in surprise while Tom shook hands with the man and thanked him for having saved his life.

"Well, either that man Grounder is the most accomplished villain in the world, or he is an honest man," mused Bert. "I'm not satisfied yet that he is not a scoundrel, but what can I say? I can prove nothing."

The party now proceeded, and Peary made Tom and his chums keep with the main body until the journey on foot was finished. At the end of an hour they were able to use the sledges again, and they sped on for many miles until they reached the base of a great mountain, and here they paused, while the work of erecting a shelter went on. The portable house was put up and made comfortable, for it was likely that they might have to spend considerable time in it, as Peary intended to make it his headquarters during his tours of exploration in various directions. That done, after the work was finished, there was another tremendous snowstorm. The house was warm and snug within, and the snow, banking up all around it, made it still more so.

After the storm there were several days of intensely cold weather, and it was impossible to leave the house except for a short distance. Then the weather moderated, and one day Peary signified his intention of going out with a party on a short exploring trip.

CHAPTER VII.—Lost in the Snow.

They were brought out and harnessed to the sledges, and soon after breakfast the party set out. The three boys, Grounder, Bill and an Esquimaux driver, occupied the sledge. Peary and his wife, the boatswain, and another driver went ahead, and the third was used by the remainder,

the house being securely closed, and left to take care of itself. Away they sped over the crisp snow, the drivers cracking their long whips, while the dogs flew like the wind, seeming to be glad to be once more out in the cold bracing air, after having been shut up in the house.

The sledges seemed to fairly skim along, and the dogs did not appear to mind the weight in the least but raced along as though fatigue was something unknown. Each dog had a separate harness and rein, the latter being fastened to the sledge and not held by the driver, who kept his strange steeds in line by a snap of his whip or a word now and then. Usually the dogs kept well apart, but occasionally they would run in a bunch, and at such times there would be a great snapping and snarling among them until the driver, picking out some particular offender would take him a sharp crack in the ear or the flank with the lash and something like order would be restored. Only an Esquimaux can drive those dogs satisfactorily or manage them at all, and Peary had selected his drivers for their especial capability in that line.

"Them dogs knows a sight more'n these yaller niggers what's drivin' on 'em," muttered old Bill presently. "But they won't mind no one else, and a white man 'd find 'em wuss to look arter than a lot o' monkeys."

"You've been up in this country before, then, Bill?" asked Fred Gordon.

"Surely I have. I've been all over, from one side o' the world to the other, from the North Pole to the South Pole, and across to——"

"You've been to the North Pole, eh? Then you can show us the way."

"Well, I've kinder forgot the road," muttered the old fellow, "and then I went in a airship, and the chart we had wouldn't be no use to you."

"No, I guess not," laughed Fred. "Been to the South Pole, too, eh? What did it look like?"

Just then the dogs caught sight of something, a fox or wolf probably, and started off upon their own account to overtake it. The driver snapped his whip and called to them in sharp, shrill tones, but, unheeding him, they dashed on. One of the runners of the sledge struck an obstruction of some kind, and the whole affair was in danger of upsetting.

"Cut the plaguev dogs loose and run chances," cried Bill. "Hi, there, Jack Grounder, you're nearest. Got a knife?"

In an instant Grounder whipped out a knife from his belt and reached forward. The driver uttered a shrill cry and pushed Grounder back with one arm, while he snapped his whip viciously, striking now one, now another of the dogs in quick succession. In a moment the sledge righted itself, and the dogs sped on as before. Grounder was about to restore his knife to its sheath, when Bert bent forward suddenly and said:

"Excuse me, but I think you've broken your knife, Jack. Isn't this a piece of it?"

Grounder colored for an instant, and then holding out the knife, said carelessly:

"That don't look like a broken knife, does it?"

"No, it doesn't."

"Let's see the piece," muttered the man. "Where'd you get it, anyhow?"

"Oh, if it doesn't fit your knife, it doesn't matter," said Bert, calmly. "I thought you had broken yours when I picked it up."

"No, it's all right," growled the man, but the sledge became unsteady again for the moment, and the occupants had to look out for their own individual safety and had no time to waste in discussion.

"His knife has been broken at the point, and he has reground it," thought Bert. "Why did he color when I asked him? It was indeed he who tried to stab Tom. I am certain of it."

Tom had scarcely heard the talk between Bert and the sailor, being pre-occupied at the time, and now there was no opportunity to question his chum upon the matter, when he suddenly realized that it concerned himself. On they went over the snow, Peary's sledge being in advance a considerable distance, while the third was about as far behind. Suddenly, with scarcely a moment's warning, it began to snow most violently, but the driver kept right on, urging the dogs to renewed exertions. The boys were obliged to lower their heads and pull their hoods well down over their faces to escape the fierce blast of wind and snow that beat against them.

"Better lie down, young fellers," growled old Bill, presently. "You'll get out of the wust of it that way."

The boys crouched as low as possible, and much of the wind went over their heads, although they could not escape all of it. It was evidently the guide's intention to keep on until he overtook the leading sledge; but the storm presently became so violent that it was next to impossible to see his way ahead, or to make the dogs hear his voice. At last the dogs stopped and lay down in a group on the snow, huddled closely together, as if to keep each other warm.

"Reckon we might as well do the same," grunted Bill, sliding down under the fur robe which covered him. "We don't know how long this storm's going to last, and there's nothin' agin our makin' ourselves comfortable."

The boys snuggled down next to the sailor, while Grounder crouched in a corner by himself, and muttered imprecations on their bad fortune. At last they heard the voice of the driver, and shaking off the snow they crawled out from under the furs and saw that the storm had greatly moderated, so that there was no obstacle to their proceeding. The driver cracked his whip, the dogs sprang up, and in a moment were scurrying across the snow as before. Bill looked all around, and presently muttered:

"Waal, I'm blowed if I can see anyone, fore or aft. Mebby the other fellows got under cover."

For a long time they kept on, and then the driver seemed puzzled and said something to Bill.

"Blest if I know, Jim," the old fellow answered. "I thought the dogs might catch the scent, but they ain't no tracks nor any signs to tell where they're got to."

"You don't mean," cried Tom, "that we are lost?"

"Waal, that's just what I'm afeerd on, my boy."

they knew nothing of, and with nothing to guide them. They had in some manner gone astray after resuming their journey, for they could see nothing of the other two sledges nor any sign of life.

"Reckon we can follow the direction we was going fust off," said Bill, producing a pocket compass, but even this course did not help them, as, after traveling an hour longer they still saw no signs of the other sledges.

"Reckon we had better go back," said Bill at length, and the driver turned to retrace the distance they had gone.

In a short time, however, they realized the futility of their course, for the wind had obliterated all their tracks and, even with the compass to guide them, they were obliged now and then to make deviations and the further they went the more astray they seemed to go. Finally Grounder dashed the compass from Bill's hand in a rage and said, angrily:

"That's no good, you old fool! Leave it to the dogs to get home and we'll do it."

"Just as you say, Jack," said the old fellow, and he spoke a few words to the driver in his own language.

"If we hadn't a lot of green boys with us we'd be all right," growled Grounder; "but they've just set everything wrong, and we'd be better off without 'em."

"Never you mind the boys," said Bill. "They're all right, and one on 'em saved the left'nant's life."

"We did not ask you to come with us," said Bert, hotly, "and if you don't like our company you can leave it."

Grounder glared savagely at the young fellow and muttered something under his breath, while Tom put his hand on Bert's arm to prevent his saying any more. They kept on, and presently in the distance saw what appeared to be a mass of black volcanic rocks rising to a considerable height. Another sudden and very violent storm interrupted their progress, and they were delayed for more than an hour. After that they pushed on and reached the base of the rocks a short time before nightfall.

"Well, we're here," muttered Grounder, "and now we've got to stay, for night is coming on and we can't see anything, and if we did, there wouldn't be time to——"

"Never mind your grumblin', Jack, but make the best o' things, like the rest o' us," interrupted Bill.

Preparations were at once made for spending the night in the place. A sheltered nook among the rocks was found, and here they formed their camp. They were supplied with provisions and a spirit lamp, with sleeping bags and other necessities, and it was therefore no great hardship for them to spend the night away from the house. There were no traces of wolves or other wild animals, and after supper they made themselves comfortable and went to sleep, leaving the Esquimau driver on guard. In the early morning, the nights being short at this season, they arose, and after taking breakfast, set out to climb the rocks.

Bill and the boys went in one direction, and Grounder and the driver in another. The boys presently lost sight of Grounder, as Tom ran

CHAPTER VIII.—Most Astonishing Meeting.

There was soon no doubt about it. They were lost in the wilderness of snow and ice, in a land

ahead, declaring that he saw something. He had found an easy way up the rocks, and the rest followed. As they ascended higher, however, the way became steeper, and they were often obliged to stop and rest. Presently Bill found a better path and passed Tom. Suddenly, as he pressed on, he stopped, pointed above him, and shouted:

"Well, just look o' that!"

Just around a mass of black rocks they could see a flag fluttering, but they could not see to what it was fastened.

"Well, if there ain't the Stars and Stripes!" cried Bert. "Some of our party are here, beyond a doubt."

"Hurrah!" cried Tom. "We haven't gone so far wrong, after all."

"But that flag is on a staff," said Fred, "and Peary doesn't carry the colors with him every time he goes off on a little trip."

They kept on, making their way from point to point, and in a few moments they could see the flag more clearly. It floated from a staff driven into a crevice in the rocks apparently, but there was no sign of life anywhere about.

"Hallo!" cried Bill, hurrying forward.

There was no answer, and the old man passed on, suddenly coming out upon a more level part of the rocks. Then he paused in utter astonishment at what he beheld. Further up, resting between two masses of black rock, was a small boat, near the stern of which the flag was planted. To the left of the boat, half reclining on the bare rock, was an old man dressed in furs. He wore a long, white beard, and had a kindly face, albeit there was a strange expression in his eyes.

"Wull, I never did!" exclaimed Bill, pausing to allow the boys to come up. "Ship ahoy, mate!" "Below there!" called out the old man, maintaining his recumbent position. "Come up to the castle, have you?"

"Reckon we have," muttered Bill, greatly puzzled. "That boat belong to you, cap'n?"

"Yes, that's my boat."

"Water come up as high as this often?"

"Well, now and then; but it's well to be prepared."

"Ain't going to set sail, are ye, this mornin', cap'n?" asked Bill, coming closer and looking the old man in the face.

"No, we can't start till Daisy gets better. She's lonesome up here. When did your ship get in?"

"Oh, we anchored last night and came to take a look around. You live up here? Pretty breezy, ain't it?"

"My castle is here," said the old man, "and I am the emperor of all the thousands who live here. I'm glad to see you."

"Crazy as a loon!" muttered Bill, to himself. "Wonder who he is, anyway."

The boys had now joined Bill, and they gazed in surprise at the old hermit of the rocks.

"Do you live here on the rocks?" asked Tom. "Isn't this rather strange a place for a boat?"

"My boat is on the shore, and my ship is on the sea," answered the old man, in sing-song tones. "Will you walk into my parlor, gentlemen? It is up a winding stair like the spider's, but there are no spiders in it. Ha, ha! Daisy keeps them all away."

"Who is Daisy?" asked Tom.

"Aha, you shall see her, my Arctic Daisy, I

call her. Ha, ha! You'll not find many like her," and the old man laughed as he arose from where he had been sitting.

He was clearly insane, as the vacant look in his eyes indicated, but that he was harmless none of his own friends could doubt. With a polite wave of his hand he begged Bill and the boys to follow, and then led the way higher up the rocks and around a large mass that towered to a great height above their heads. Suddenly, as they came upon a level portion, which commanded a wide extent of country, Tom uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Look there!" he cried, seizing Bill's arm, and pointing to the plain below. "That traitor has abandoned us, left us to perish."

"The villain!" cried Bert. "There he goes with the sledge. We should not have left him alone for an instant. I said that Jack Grounder was a scoundrel, and now I know it."

CHAPTER IX.—In the Crater.

Across the snowy plain, growing smaller and smaller to the watchers on the black rocks, hurried the sledge bearing the treacherous Grounder, until at last it became a mere speck in the distance, and then faded from sight.

"I reckon the fust thing we want to find out is how to get away from this place," remarked old Bill. "Hallo, where is our queer friend? That fellow is the craziest coot I ever see, but he's got a kind heart, I reckon."

"You can't tell much about that," said Fred, "and after our experience it isn't safe to trust anybody."

"Oh, yes, it is," spoke up Tom, cheerily. "You mustn't condemn the whole world on account of the wickedness of a few. Ah, here comes our strange friend now, and with a companion."

"Hallo! he has a young fellow like ourselves with him!" cried Bert.

The strange old man had suddenly appeared around a bend in the rocky path, accompanied by a young man clad in furs. They approached, and then Tom saw that the old man's companion was not a young man, as he had supposed, but a young girl dressed in male attire.

"This is my daughter, the queen of the North Pole," he said. "Jennie, these are good friends of ours."

"I am glad to see you all, friends," said the girl, fixing her eyes upon Tom in particular. "It is so lonely up here amid the snow and ice that I would almost welcome an enemy. Friends, therefore, are all the more welcome."

"Come into our parlor," said the old man, "and see how we live up here in the ice. Never mind that traitor who has abandoned you. I will see that you get back among your friends, if you desire it."

"What shall we call you, mate?" asked old Bill.

"I am Captain Jack Hall, commander of the garrison here, and this is my daughter Jennie. Come into my parlor, friends."

The recluse now led the way up and around the great masses of black rock, and presently disappeared through an opening at his feet.

"This is the crater of a long extinct volcano," said the girl, who walked by Tom's side. "Here is our home, and a very comfortable one it is."

They all descended a flight of steps cut in the rock, and soon reached a door which stood invitingly open. Entering, they found themselves in a room, or more properly speaking, a cavern, twenty feet in diameter, comfortably fitted up, well warmed, and lighted from above.

"The boat you saw on the rocks covers a crevice," said Jennie, "and in the bottom is a dead-light of glass which gives us light."

"But the place is warm," said Tom, "and I see no stove or lamp."

"The stove is in the room below," said the recluse. "We have three or four stories in our house."

"How did ye get here, mate?" asked Bill.

"Wrecked. I was in the North Star, whaler, which was nipped in the ice and went to pieces. I saved the wreck of a boat and some other things, and fitted up a house here in the rocks."

"And the gal was with you, I s'pose?"

"Yes, she was my only comfort when all the rest deserted me or died of hunger and cold."

"How long have you lived here?" asked Tom of the girl.

"Three years; and sometimes it's very lonely, but father will not leave here, and I must remain here."

"But how do you find enough to eat in this wilderness?"

"Oh, there are birds at times, and they lay their eggs among the rocks, and then there are bears and seals, and we find edible mosses, and we still have many of the ship's stores."

They remained with the recluse all that day, for he had told them that on the next he would try and find them the means of returning to the house. There were many rooms in the queer dwelling in the crater, and Tom and his chums were provided with a comfortable one on one of the lower levels. During the night, an hour or more past midnight, Tom suddenly awoke. He seemed to have felt a strange shaking, and to have heard a low, rumbling sound.

"I wonder what that is?" he thought, lying upon his couch of bearskins.

In a moment the rumbling was repeated, louder than before.

"It can't be thunder, up here in Greenland," he mused.

In another instant it came again. Following it came a violent rocking motion like that of a ship at sea.

"Hallo! What's the matter?" called Bert from the darkness.

"I don't know, but I am afraid this old——"

There was a sound, as if under their feet, like a roar. Instantly a strong odor of sulphur was discerned.

"It's the old volcano bursting its bonds at last!" cried Tom, springing to his feet.

"For heaven's sake then, let us alarm the rest!" cried Bert, springing up and lighting a match.

Fred now awoke and when a lamp had been lighted Tom looked around.

"Hallo! Here is a new fissure!" he cried, pointing to a great crack in the floor where before there had been none.

Then, holding the lamp above his head he

looked down. Far, far below he could see a dull red glow, which as he looked grew brighter. He could hear a rumbling, boiling sound, and as he held the lamp lower its flame began to flicker and grow dim. Then a breath of hot, mephitic air puffed up from below and caused him to choke.

"We must get out of here!" he cried. "The volcano is about to break forth again."

The three boys hurried to the room above and aroused Bill. Then they called loudly to Jack Hall, and he presently appeared.

"What's the matter?"

"The volcano is on fire again!"

"We have no time to lose."

Even as the boys spoke the floor shook most perceptibly.

"I saw the flame!" cried Tom. "We cannot tell at what moment it may burst forth."

"Jennie!" cried Hall, and in a moment the girl came hurrying from her room among the black rocks.

There was a sound as of thunder, and a gust of foul, sulphurous air filled the place. Tom seized the girl in his arms and hurried upward. In a few minutes they were all in the open air on one of the broad platforms of black rock. As they hurried down the steep steps to the level the whole mass seemed to vibrate and a roar as of a hundred cannon shook the air.

CHAPTER X.—The Eruption.

Barely escaping being hurled from the rocks with his precious burden in his arms, Tom hurried down the steps, calling excitedly to his friends to follow. Close upon the shock and the roar came a bright light that illuminated the heavens. As they reached the last ledge there was a sudden awful roar, the ground rocked violently, and a great mass of fire burst from the volcano. They hastened from the perilous spot as a shower of hot cinders fell hissing upon the snow. In a few moments great streams of glowing lava came rushing down the sides of the black mass, covering the spot where they had lately stood.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said old Bill. "It was a plaguey good thing we got out o' there when we did."

"There goes the old home," said Jack Hall, "like all the rest. One broken up by a villain, the ship wrecked, and this resting place destroyed by the hidden fires beneath the earth."

"Come!" cried Tom. "We must make haste."

It was indeed time that they left the place. The light from the flaming cone guided them as they sped on, and they needed no other. Across their path and far ahead shone the blood-red light of the fiery torch while the heavens formed a crimson dome above them. On and on they sped, fearing that even yet some terrible catastrophe might overtake them. Suddenly when they had gone many miles, scarcely knowing whither, they heard a dull, sullen roar behind them in the direction of the volcano. Turning, they saw a pillar of fire shoot many hundred feet into the air, and then heard the most terrible explosion. For a few moments all the air seemed filled with a fiery rain. Then, with the suddenness of a lightning

stroke the flame suddenly went out, and left a darkness as black as the deepest cavern of Styx itself.

The red dome of the sky vanished, and in its place was a vault of ink in which not the tiniest speck of light appeared. This was not for long, however, and the darkness was only the more intense by contrast. Little by little they saw the stars appear, until at last all the heavens were studded with them. The volcano seemed to have made its influence felt even at a distance, for the air was much milder than it had been, and was not at all uncomfortable. On and on under the myriad stars went the fugitives without knowing whither, except that they must find the house or the vessel or some member of the exploring party. Fortunately they had been able to fully dress and to secure their weapons before being driven from their strange home, so that they were not entirely helpless in this wilderness of ice and snow. At last there came the first signs of day in the east. On they pushed till it was broad daylight, when, of a sudden, old Bill pointed to a speck in the distance, and said:

"I'll be blowed if I don't think that that 'ere's the house."

Gradually the speck grew larger and larger, till it assumed definite shape, and there could no longer be any doubt that it was a house. That it was Peary's house was also certain, because there could be no other in this wild region. Then, too, the signal flag was one that Mrs. Pearl had herself made, and the boys speedily recognized it as it fluttered in the morning breeze. At last they came within hail, and Tom and the boys gave a glad shout. Presently someone came to the door, and the boys repeated the hail.

"Hello! it's Bill and the three boys come back!" cried the man, "and somebody else. Some of our fellers what went to find 'em, I guess."

A second man came to the door and looked over the shoulders of the first.

"Hallo!" shouted Tom, hurrying forward.

"Hallo, Tom! Glad to see you."

The second man was Grounder. Hurrying away with a curse upon his lips, he muttered:

"Not dead, and I had hoped to have the thing settled. H'm! I'll fix him yet."

Slinking away with an evil look on his face, he listened for further sounds of the approach of the rescuing party, muttering savagely to himself. Suddenly Mrs. Peary came hurriedly into the room where he was, followed by a lad dressed in furs, as Grounder supposed. With a wild cry upon his lips he flew at the supposed boy's throat and forced him backward. It was Jennie whom he had seized, and at this rough treatment her cap was thrown off, and her long hair fell upon her shoulders. Mrs. Peary sprang forward with a cry and attempted to loosen the villain's grasp upon the girl's throat.

"Help! help!" she cried, while Grounder, with a look of savage hatred, tightened his grip.

CHAPTER XI.—Past History of Jack Grounder

The cry for help was speedily heard and answered. Tom was the first to enter and see the peril of the girl he loved. With a cry like that of a wild beast he hurled himself upon Grounder.

"You coward!" he hissed, as he struck the man a terrible blow in the face.

Grounder released his hold of the girl and glared savagely at Tom. Then, like a flash, he drew a knife and rushed upon the boy. At that instant Bert and Fred dashed in. Bert struck the scoundrel a blow on the wrist and sent the knife flying.

"That's not the first time you've tried that, Jack Grounder!" he cried, "but this time you are fairly caught!"

"I was defending my own life against the young villain," muttered the lying scoundrel.

"That's a lie, Jack Grounder, and you know it!" stormed Bert. "Time and again you have tried to kill Tom, but until now we could not be certain of it."

Jack Hall and old Bill now appeared, together with two or three sailors.

"You run away with the sledge, Jack Grounder, and thought you had us, didn't you?" cried Bill. "I know the lying stories you told. Now, how are you going to get out of 'em?"

"The dogs ran away as I was engaged in loading the sledge."

"Oh, they did, did they? That's more'n I'm going to believe."

"You may believe it or not," said Grounder doggedly, "but it is the truth."

Jack Hall suddenly pressed forward, darted an eager look at Grounder, and cried:

"You here! Ha, this time you shall not escape me! I know you, Jim Grapnall, and this time I——"

"What are you talking about, you old fool?" blustered Grounder. "I don't know you; never saw you, and don't want to. My name is Jack Grounder, and nothing else."

"There is the villain who has ruined my life and made me an outcast!" cried Jack Hall.

Then he attempted to spring upon Grounder, muttering incoherently, and trying to seize the man by the throat.

"You'd better lock that idiot up before he does any mischief!" snarled Grounder, as he escaped. "He's as crazy as he can be. I never saw him before in all my life!"

Then the man got away in the confusion, and hurried off to his own quarters.

"He must have taken Jennie for Tom," said Bert. "He was just behind when Mrs. Peary took Jennie away. Now, I suppose you are satisfied of the scoundrel's intentions?" the young fellow continued, turning to his friend.

Jennie was found not to have been seriously injured, although it was only for the prompt appearance of Tom and his friends that she had not been. She retired with Mrs. Peary, while Tom, Bert, and Fred went to the lieutenant and told their story. Grounder had returned the day before and had declared that he feared the boys were lost. The dogs had run away with him, he said, and he had been powerless to stop them. The driver had been thrown out by the collision of the sledge with a mass of rough ice, and he had been unable to stop and pick him up. That evening they had all seen the distant volcano, and Peary had determined to go in search of the boys and investigate the phenomenon the next morning. Grounder's story was most plausible, the

only thing against him being the attack upon Jennie.

"This will have to be investigated," said the explorer, and he sent Bill to find Grounder and send the man to him.

Bill returned after a long search without his man.

"I believe he's either slipped out, sir, or that the 'arth has opened and swallowed him up," said the old sailor.

"Wherever he is we will see him again," asserted Bert, positively. "The wretch seeks Tom's death, and will make another attempt to carry out his purpose, I am sure."

"He'd better look out for his own pesky skin, then," growled old Bill, "for I know that Jack Hall will kill him on sight. He's the feller that made Jack all his trouble, and the wild look in the old man's eyes when he saw him meant no good to him, I can tell you."

"There isn't a man of us that wouldn't stand up for Tom," declared Bert, firmly.

"Right you are, sonny, and if I catch sight o' the skunk and can get my hands on him, he'll want a doctor's care pretty quick, I can tell you. When I was a younger man and on board the whaler——"

"Save that yarn, and tell it to Jack Grounder when you see him, Bill," laughed Fred Gordon. "It will kill him, I'm sure, or make him so sick that you'll have an easier job of getting rid of him."

"I wasn't goin' to tell no stories, you frisky young cub!" snorted Bill. "There was a feller on the whaler Walrus with me what put me in mind o' this man, and I haven't been quite satisfied that it ain't him."

"What did he do, Bill?"

"He tried to seize the ship, and did kill the fust mate, and got a bad cut on the shoulder with an ax at the time."

"But wasn't he tried and hanged for it?"

"No, 'cause he managed to get out o' the brig where he was put, got a boat, and skipped out. If Jack Grounder has a deep scar on his left shoulder—and he's sure to have one after that cut—he's the same feller."

"What was his name—the man's, I mean?"

"Joe Gunn. And there's a many things about this fellow that puts me in mind of him, though this thing happened more'n a dozen years ago."

"Joe Gunn, eh?" repeated Bert, musingly.

"The initials are the same," said Tom, "and old Jack Hall says his name is Jim Grapnall, and the initials are the same there as well."

"Yes, and he has those letters marked in blue on his right arm below the elbow," said Fred. "I have seen them. He has to take a name with those letters or people would be asking questions."

"Then if he's got those letters on his arm, he's Joe Gunn, and no mistake!" cried Bill. "I wish I'd known it afore."

"Why," asked the boys.

"Because the man killed was my chum, and I swore then that I'd either fetch him to the gal-lows or serve him the way he served the mate! I reckon that Mr. Jack Grounder'll keep out of my way when he l'arns that I know who he is now sure."

CHAPTER XII.—What Tom Overheard At Night.

The ice was open for a long distance ahead—as far as one could see, in fact. Doubtless the eruption of the volcano, once more silent and to all appearances dead, was the cause of this.

Such an opportunity could not be neglected.

However much he might desire to explore Greenland, it was well understood that Lieut. Perry would push on to the Pole, if possible.

The return to the Kite was made at once. There being open water all around, the little vessel was made ready and was soon steaming to the north.

Of Grounder nothing was seen.

Meanwhile, the Kite had proceeded many miles further north of her former position, and the boys were all in great hope of a prosperous voyage.

One night, as they were running alongshore by the light of the moon, the water being clear of ice for a considerable distance, Tom walked the deck with Jennie, it being his watch below. The tenderest of feelings had sprung up between the two, and they were together as often as occasion permitted. They had walked up and down the deck several times, and at last paused and stood against the house on deck to look at the moon and gaze across the shining sea that stretched out before them. Suddenly as they stood there silent, Tom heard a voice say:

"It'll be all right, I tell you. There'll be enough of us to carry it through."

Tom with difficulty repressed a cry of surprise, and quickly put a hand upon Jennie's arm as a token of caution. The speaker was Grounder, who was thought to be dead.

"Well, it's putty risky," growled someone whom Tom could not identify.

"No risk at all," muttered Grounder. "If you do as I say it'll be all right."

"Yes, but do you think you can get all the men you want?"

"Of course I can. The thing is as good as done now, and all we——"

Ding-dong ding-dong!

"Four bells!" called out the officer of the watch.

"I must go," muttered Grounder's companion.

"All right; but be here at eight bells."

Tom hurriedly led Jennie from the spot, crossing the deck in the moonlight.

The next moment he saw a man leave the shadow of the house on deck and hurry aft. He was unable to identify him, however, as the fellow had his face turned from the light.

"Remain here," he said to the girl.

Then he hurried around to the other side of the house on deck. There was no one to be seen.

"I wonder where Grounder hides himself!" he mused. "It's very strange and I don't understand it."

"Somebody must have helped him to stow himself away, for the men all said that they had seen nothing of him. Some of them may not, but others have, as is apparent now."

"What were they talking about? I wish I could have heard more. If the bell had not sounded I might have learned the secret, for there is one, I am sure."

"What did that fellow mean by saying it was risky? If Grounder has any hand in the affair,

whatever it is, there must be something wrong about it.

"Can they be up to mischief, they and others equally bad? What can it mean? Mutiny? I don't know anyone on board who would be bad enough to attempt such a thing. No, no, it must be simply a raid on the supplies, to get an extra quantity of liquor, that's all."

Hurrying back to Jennie, he asked:

"What do you suppose those men were talking about?"

"I don't know, but I fear that it was nothing good."

"Well, I ain't sure myself, and I think I'll keep still about it till I can find out more."

"I don't think that such men are to be trusted."

"Neither do I; but if I make a move now I shall learn nothing, and perhaps put them on their guard."

"The man Grounder is a scoundrel."

"Yes, but if we institute a search for him now it will only make his friends, whoever they are, more cautious."

"Well, Tom dear, I think I will go below," said Jennie, presently. "Whatever you do, do not face that villain alone, for he means to kill you, and will do it, if he can."

"I will look out for him," said Tom, as he led the girl to the companionway.

Going to the wheel on the pretext of seeing how the vessel headed, but really to ascertain who the helmsman was, he was astonished to find old Bill there.

"Hallo, Bill," he said, "is it you?"

"'Tain't no one else, young feller," answered the old sailor. "Who did yer spect ter find if not me?"

"Oh, no one," answered Tom, carelessly. "I just had a notion to know how we are heading, that's all."

Then he looked in the binnacle box, and went forward again, as carelessly as he had come.

"That couldn't have been old Bill I heard with Grounder," he thought. "But I didn't see but one man go to the wheel, and it wasn't Old Bill that left it. I don't understand it. Old Bill would sooner consort with the arch fiend himself, than have anything to do with Grounder, or so I always supposed, at all events."

Thinking it best to consult his chums about the mysterious affair, Tom now went below.

He found Fred fast asleep in his bunk, and as he would have to turn out at the next call of the watch, Tom did not awaken him. Bert was not in his bunk, and must, therefore, be on deck, and Tom did not care to talk to him there while he was on duty. He, therefore, turned in and slept till midnight, when the watch was called, hurrying upon deck with his companions. The moon had set, but in its place there was a brilliant aurora, the air being much colder than when Tom had gone below. The men took their places, and for a long time all was quiet, the low voices of two or three sailors engaged in conversation forward being the only sound heard. After a time even this died out, the entire ship being given over to silence. Tom, who was on the lookout, suddenly saw a man steal out of the galley and utter a low whistle. Instantly he was joined by two others, and all three began to move cautiously across deck, the light at their backs. One of

the men carried a heavy capstan bar in his hand, and as he was joined by the others, he said in a hoarse whisper:

"Now then, my men, one bold stroke and the vessel is ours!"

Sounds carry far in a still, cold night, especially whispers. Tom heard the man's words more plainly than if they had been shouted.

The man was Grounder. His object was plain enough now in the light of these last words. He intended to seize the vessel, to be used for his own evil purposes, no doubt. Tom acted on the instant. The least delay now meant ruin.

"Ahoy, Bert, Fred, anybody, all hands!" he shouted. "There is mutiny afoot!"

"All hands on deck!" yelled Fred, rushing to the cabin doors and throwing them open.

"What does this mean?" cried one of the under officers, who was in charge of the deck.

"Come on!" shouted Grounder. "One blow and the vessel is ours. Down with that young meddler, first of all!"

"That man is a mutineer," cried Tom, "and if he succeeds it means death to every honest man here."

CHAPTER XIII.—Grounder's Plans Fail.

Tom's alarm came none too soon. Fred's timely assistance was of the utmost value as well. As Grounder and his men, numbering a full dozen, came leaping across deck, Tom dashed to the fore-castle door and raised a second alarm. In an instant men came hurrying from forward and aft. The alarm had spread throughout the vessel. Armed men came hurrying on deck from below, and harsh voices were heard issuing orders. If the mutineers meant to accomplish anything they must work at once. The sudden detection of the plan, however, made many desert him whom Grounder had trusted to aid him.

"Down with that young bawler!" he cried, rushing toward Tom.

"Ha, ha, Jack Grounder, you have turned up again, have you?" spoke up Bert, who had suddenly appeared.

"And the same old scoundrel he always was," added Bill. "I know you now for keeps, Joe Gunn!"

The whole crew was now aroused and Grounder's cause was hopeless. He sprang toward the rail, where one of the boats swung in the davits ready to be lowered at a moment's notice. It had evidently been prepared for another purpose. Grounder sprang into it from the rail and loosened the fales. As it descended two men leaped into it with him.

"Stop 'em!" cried one of the officers, hurrying to the rail.

Splash! The boat was in the water even as he spoke. Grounder seized an oar, and rowed with all his might toward the shore, distant less than half a mile from the Kate.

"The misguided creature will die if he reaches the land," murmured Peary. "I wish we could have stopped him."

Bert assisted Tom to reach the deck, the young fellow feeling still somewhat faint.

"I ought to have told what I heard during the first watch," he said, "but I did not get hold of

much, and I was afraid to alarm the fellows unnecessarily."

"It was that, my lad?" asked Peary, and Tom related to the commander the substance of the conversation between Grounder and the unknown.

"Who was the other man?" asked Peary.

"I don't know, sir, the voice was unfamiliar to me, or perhaps disguised. I thought for a moment that it was Bill, when I saw him at the wheel immediately afterwards."

"Call the roll and see who is missing, Mr. Tracey," said Peary.

The missing men proved to be the two laziest, most discontented men in all the crew.

"H'm! I ain't surprised at finding them fellers in sech company," grunted Bill. "They're just the sort that would follow a man like Joe Gunn. We're well rid of the whole lot."

"I am deeply grieved that this has happened," said the explorer. "The men will surely perish alone in this icy wilderness."

Orders were then given to run the Kite nearer to the shore, a boat being made ready for lowering. They were in a land of sudden changes, however, and before they were scarcely aware, great flakes of snow began to fall, the sky was heavily overcast, and the line of the shore became blotted out. The course of the Kite was then altered, so that the danger of running aground in the storm might be obviated. Those whose duty it was to remain on deck hastily procured extra clothing, while those who had a watch below quickly availed themselves of the privilege.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Search for the Deserters.

Great masses of ice were floating in every direction, and here and there they joined, making floes and impeding the progress of the vessel. Immense quantities of drifting ice had come upon them during the night, and considerable new ice had formed. By daybreak the appearance of the sea had been greatly changed, and their progress was no longer the easy affair that it had been. Although Jack Grounder had attempted to raise a mutiny, and had tried to kill Tom Cole, Lieut. Peary could not find it in his heart to abandon the man on this unknown shore, and was determined to rescue him if possible.

Many thought with Fred Gordon and old Bill that it was sympathy wasted to extend it to such a man, but the explorer declared that he might have repented, and that he would not sacrifice the lives of even three such worthless fellows as Jack Grounder and his companions if he could possibly save them. Tom volunteered to be one of a party to go in search of the men, and Bert and Fred, resolved to stick by their chum, added their names to the list.

"If Tom is bound to go on such a foolish errand, it is my duty to see him through," said Bert, and Fred was of the same opinion.

Old Bill, seeing that the boys were all going, determined to make one of the party, and Jack Hall also asked permission to go along. Jennie wanted to accompany Tom, but the young fellow would not hear of her taking such a risk, and Lieut. Peary refused to give his consent. The old

hermit was strong and vigorous, inured to the climate, and knew the coast well, and there could be no objection to his making one of the party. One of the sailors volunteered, and as that made six men altogether, Peary said that no more were needed, and that the party could start at once. Landing would be difficult in any case, but as it would be extremely dangerous for the Kite to go inshore, it was determined to send a boat.

The party was to be put on shore, and the boat would then return to the vessel, which would lie to out in the stream and await the return of the searching party. The boat set out from the vessel at a favorable opportunity, and those on board watched it with no little anxiety. Slowly it made its way to shore, now threatened with destruction by great bergs which bore down upon it, now seeming about to be engulfed in the icy waters, and now speeding safely toward land. When at last it had reached the shore, and its occupants disembarked, a cheer went up from all who witnessed the sight.

The party took its bearings, and then struck into the interior in search of traces of the fugitives. They had traveled for two or three hours when they suddenly came upon a trail. Three pairs of footprints could be plainly seen upon the light snow, and now and then the point of a pike-point or the butt of a musket.

"Here we are," said old Bill. "Now to foller 'em up."

"They must have abandoned their boat," said Tom, "and be pretty well loaded up. They can't make very rapid progress."

The trail was clear enough, but there was no way of determining how long it had been made. There was no one in sight across the plain, and objects could be seen for a long distance in the clear air. Several miles away, ten at least, by the shortest calculation, there arose several great masses which seemed to be hills, and it was probable that the fugitives would be found among them. Now and again the trail would be faint where the wind had swept the snow across it, and then it would be distinct again, so that the searching party had very little trouble in following it. Having accomplished so much, it was considered advisable to push on as rapidly as possible without stopping for rest or to eat.

On they went at a steady jog, but at the end of two hours they still saw nothing of the deserters, the hills appearing to be no nearer than at first. As the sun sank lower there began to be signs of an approaching storm, and the wind, which hitherto had been scarcely perceptible, now whistled dismally, though as yet they did not feel its influence, being sheltered from it by a line of hills from the north. At last the sun sank from sight in the west, and after a short period of twilight, the air suddenly grew colder, the sky was obscured in an instant, and the snow began to fall.

"There's something ahead that looks like a native hut," cried old Bill. "We've gotter get under shelter in a hurry."

The boys could just make out something round and white on the snow a few hundred yards in advance, and they all hurried forward. It proved to be not one but a collection of igloos or Esquimau huts built of blocks of ice or hardened

snow, each large enough to accommodate three or four persons.

"Hello!" cried Bill, as he came up. "Hello, I say! Anybody at home?"

There was no answer, and after waiting a minute or two the old sailor grunted:

"Reckon ther folks have all gone out, but we'll keep house for 'em till they get back. You'll have to stoop to get in, and I'll go in fust to show yer the way."

So saying, the old fellow dropped upon all fours, and entered the low, narrow passage leading to the interior of one of the igloos. Presently his voice was heard calling to those without:

"Come on in, boys. There's no one here, and there hain't been, I reckon, in a long time. Things smell sweeter'n usual in here."

Two or three of the igloos were found to be connected, and these were taken possession of by the party. Spirit lamps were started, and supper was prepared in a short time, all hands finding the huts as comfortable, if not as roomy as their quarters on the Kite. After supper Bill took a look out at the weather, and upon his return, very speedily made, reported that it was snowing violently, and blowing a gale as well.

"It's a fortunate thing we found the igloos, then," said Tom, "for even this sort of a shelter is better than none."

Bill proceeded to light his pipe, and then withdrew to a corner and smoked in silence. An hour or two later Tom was suddenly aroused from a heavy sleep, into which he had fallen, by a rough shake from Bill, who as soon as he saw that the boy was fairly well awake, said:

"Don't make no noise, but be on your guard. There's about forty of the worst-looking fellows outside you ever saw."

"Esquimaux?" asked Tom.

"Injuns, I reckon, and that's wuss and more of it. I guess we're goin' ter have more fun than we counted on. Load up all yer guns, for you'll need 'em."

CHAPTER XV.—Captured by Indians.

Tom had awakened his friends when Bill had given the alarm, and they were all gathered in front of the igloos awaiting the attack. At some little distance, having retreated when the whites appeared, stood the enemy. They numbered fully forty, as the old sailor had said. They were not Esquimaux, as could easily be seen by the light of the waning moon. The snow had ceased, and the sky was much clearer, although now and then clouds went scurrying over the face of the moon. The strangers appeared to be Indians of whom there are many in the north, and more to be dreaded than the Esquimaux. Old Jack Hall advanced a few steps and said something to the natives in a language which none of the explorers understood. One of the strangers stepped forward a pace and answered, speaking rapidly and evidently in anger.

"These men say that a party of whites murdered two of their number yesterday," explained Jack Hall, "and they believe that we are harboring the murderers, and vow vengeance upon us."

Suddenly, like a perfect avalanche, the whole body of Indians swept down upon them before the

slightest resistance could be offered. In an instant they were all prisoners. Then, with great rapidity the Indians hurried through the igloos, taking out everything that they contained. Tom and his friends, meanwhile, were held so tightly that they were unable to move. Then, having rifled the huts, the Indians laid them low by a few swift blows, breaking in the roofs and destroying the passages from one to another. Then the chief uttered a few hurried words, and the entire party dashed away on the wings of the wind, carrying their prisoners with them. The Indians seemed to be tireless, and ran over the snow with the rapidity of the Esquimaux dogs, almost, no obstructions seeming to hinder them. It was not long before Tom and his chums became exhausted, and seemed unable to go another step.

Then, without stopping, their captors suddenly raised the boys upon their shoulders, and ran on as before. For more than two hours they kept up the tireless chase, never once pausing for a rest, until Tom began to think that nothing could exhaust them. At last they stopped in a deep valley among the hills, and here camp was made. Rude huts were erected and banked up on one side, and then a fire fed with oil and the fat of bears and other Arctic animals was lighted in the central space surrounded by the huts. The prisoners were separated from each other, being put in different huts and guarded by four or five Indians.

"They must be going to hold some sort of a trial over us, I suppose," mused Tom, "for if they had really believed us guilty they would have killed us at the first. There must be some doubt about it in their minds."

The boys were not bound, but they were watched so closely that there was no chance of escaping.

"They needn't take such pains to watch me," thought Bert. "It isn't likely that I am going to run away until I know what has become of the rest of us."

The Indians prepared a meal, cooking their food over the fire, and not eating it raw as the Esquimaux do. The Indians did not offer their prisoners any food, and ate only sparingly of it themselves.

"They won't let us eat with them," muttered Fred, who could see what was going on, although he saw nothing of his friends. "That's a bad sign. They evidently believe us guilty of the murder of their comrades."

At last, wearied by their long journey and the excitement the whites fell asleep. Tom allowed nothing to worry him, and slept soundly, but Fred awoke at intervals during the night. On one of these occasions toward morning he saw a tall Indian push aside the flap over the entrance of the hut, look around, and mutter:

"H'm! Don't see nothin' of him in here. Wonder where he is."

"Bill," said Fred, in a hoarse whisper.

"Sh! that you? Awake, eh? Where's Tom?"

"Don't know. I took you for an Indian."

"I borrowed these duds from one of 'em. They was all dead sleepy in my tent. Reckon they drank too much spirits."

"Spirits?"

"Yes, out o' the lamps. They used up all there was in 'em."

"Sh!" cautioned Fred, as an Indian near him began to move uneasily.

"That's all right," said Bill. "I don't want to hurt him. I just want to get all our fellers together."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Light out and leave these fellers. We've got to get back to the vessel. I'm afraid there's no chance of findin' Grounder and them two other fellows now."

"That's just what I always said."

"Well, you keep awake, and I'll go and hunt up t'others," whispered Bill, and in an instant he had disappeared.

Tom was fast asleep when someone awoke him by putting a hand upon his face and whispering in his ear:

"Wake up, lad, wake up, wake up!"

It was several moments before Tom could arouse himself, although he was perfectly conscious of what had taken place.

"What's the mat——"

"Sh! Speak low! We're going to escape from the Indians."

"But aren't they keeping guard?" asked Tom of the man who had awakened him.

He perceived now that this was the old recluse of the volcano.

"Half of 'em are in a drunken sleep, and many of the rest are——"

"What do you say?" asked Tom, a strange suspicion crossing his mind.

"Be ready to spring outside the moment you hear me call," said the strange old man.

"But our stores."

"I will see to them," and Jack Hall had vanished.

CHAPTER XVI.—A Strange Way of Escape.

Five minutes passed. To Tom, on the alert for a signal, they seemed like hours. What was happening outside? If there were work to be done, why was he not called upon? He hated to remain there idle when he might be of service. Suddenly he heard the sharp report of a pistol shot. Then he heard loud and angry voices just outside. He would delay no longer. Dashing aside the hangings at the entrance, he sprang into the open space surrounded by the huts. A startling sight met his gaze. Old Bill and Jack Hall were engaged in a terrific hand-to-hand fight with five stalwart savages. The pistol shot had aroused friends and enemies alike. As Tom flew to the aid of Bill and Jack, he was joined by Bert and Fred.

The sailor from the Kite suddenly appeared from somewhere and brained one of Bill's assailants. Tom threw himself pell-mell upon another and hurled him to the ground without ceremony. Other Indians appeared, uttering shrill cries, and the peril of the whites became every instant greater.

Crack! Thud! Pistols shots rang out, and the sound of heavy bodies falling to the ground followed. "This way!" suddenly cried Jack Hall, swinging a clubbed rifle about his head and felling a half dozen of the savages.

Then, scattering the smoldering fire with a sweep of his foot, he suddenly dashed between two of the huts and made for the hills. He was instantly followed by the three boys, and then Bill and the sailor brought up the rear. In a few moments Jack paused, and said hastily:

"Pick up the bundles, lads. We'll take what we can at all events."

Tom had nearly fallen over a bundle lying in the path, and this he now picked up and slung over his shoulder by a strap attached to it. There were other packages, and it was evident that much of the supplies had been removed before the giving of the alarm. They pushed rapidly on along the valley between two of the hills, and for a short time there was no sound of pursuit. Then there came a sudden loud report, like an explosion.

"What's that?" cried Tom.

"Some of our powder must have got in the fire," said Bill. "We ought to have it ourselves, but I reckon it's done about as much damage, maybe more."

There was no time to ask or answer questions, and they hurried on, under the lead of Jack Hall, who was the best guide they could have had, although he declared that he knew nothing of this particular region. Presently the tramp of feet was heard behind them. Then there came a whizzing sound, as of arrows or bullets. Tom suddenly felt a shock, and fell on his face.

"What's the matter, boy?" asked Bill.

"I don't know. I seem to have been struck, but there is no pain."

"H'm! No wonder," muttered Bill, as he pulled the shaft of an arrow from the pack Tom carried. "It's a good thing you had that pack on your shoulder."

Another shower of arrows flew among the party, and was answered by a volley from rifles and revolvers.

"Haste, haste!" cried Jack Hall. "I see some sort of natural fortress beyond. From that we can make a better defense."

There was very little light, but the old hermit was sharp-sighted, and had seen the shelter among the rocks as he ran on. There was a steep path which led to a natural ledge or shelf of rock provided with a sort of rampart, behind which the fugitives could take refuge. The old man stopped, hurried the boys ahead of him, and then sprang up with the others. The natural barricade was about four feet in height, and the place could be defended by a small number against a hundred. On came the Indians with terrific yells, expecting to make short work of the fugitives.

They suddenly paused as they saw the barricade and muttered among themselves. In the interior the whites had fortified themselves as strongly as possible, and were ready to meet the enemy. The Indians sent a shower of arrows toward the whites which had no further effect than striking the rocks and falling to the ground. The fugitives replied with a volley of loose stones. There were many of these, some small enough to handle easily, and others which would require considerable strength to lift. These latter were reserved for a fight at close quarters. The Indians sent in another cloud of arrows, and then dashed forward.

Crack, crack! The arrows were answered by bullets. Every man in the little party fired, taking deliberate aim. A chorus of yells arose as the report rang out. Many fell, but the others pressed forward.

"They must not reach the ledge!" cried Tom, who was now enabled to see the enemy distinctly.

"Here is a big boulder; we will overturn it on them," said Bert.

Five or six of the Indians, more daring than the rest, now reached the base of the natural fortress. They attempted to reach the ledge, uttering fierce cries as they climbed the steep ascent. Tom, Bert, and Fred threw themselves upon the big boulder Bert had noticed.

In the very nick of time they sent it crashing over the edge. It struck the foremost savage and hurled him back among his followers. Then the entire party were thrown down, the boulder crushing two or three of the Indians beneath itself. Others followed them, but the three men met them with a shower of stones as big as any of them could lift. The Indians seemed determined to carry their point, and kept pressing forward.

"There must be more stones back of here," muttered Tom, making his way toward an opening which the light of the burning arrows had revealed. He pressed on, and found a cave ten or twelve feet in diameter, as it seemed, and something higher than his head. Suddenly, as he groped his way forward, the light having grown dim, he felt his feet give way beneath him. He uttered a cry of alarm, and at the next moment seemed to fall, and then go whirling through space.

"Hello! Where are you?" he heard Bert say, and then something struck him, and he flew down what seemed to be an inclined plain.

It was pitch dark, and he could see nothing, but at length, after what seemed to be an age, he suddenly felt a shock, and then fell in an inert mass, losing all consciousness.

CHAPTER XVII.—A Wonder of the North.

"Tom, wake up! Tom, I say!"

"Yes," and Tom aroused himself, to find Bert and Fred bending over him.

"Thank Heaven! We feared you were dead."

"It's enough to kill a fellow, anyhow, what we've been through."

Tom saw that the place, wherever it was, was lighted, and, looking about him, asked:

"Where are we, boys? Is this another volcano?"

"Can't tell," said Bert. "I saw you fall through the floor and ran to save you, and then I went flying through some sort of a chute."

"The same thing happened to Fred, and here we are, we three, underground somewhere, and the men above there left to fight the Indians alone."

"There is a regular passage, steep and narrow, right through the hill to this place from the little fort up there, and you found it when you went to look for the stones."

"Fortunately, Fred and I had matches, and we made a fire. This place seems like a cave, and

if there is a way out we have got to find it, for there is certainly no way of getting back to where we started."

"Can't we climb it?" asked Tom, now on his feet.

"No, it is too steep and slippery. It looks to me as if water might at one time have filled all the passage. The bottom here, you see, is of earth, not stone, and there are moss and dry grass and twigs all mixed together, lying in various corners."

"How large is this cave?"

"That we can't tell, for——"

At that moment there was a wild cry from above. Then a gleam of light appeared, and it seemed to be rapidly nearing them. In an instant Jack Hall and old Bill fell on the ground at their feet, having sped down the chute the same as the boys.

"Well, I'll be swiggled," muttered Bill, as he picked himself up, "if this ain't the rummest place I ever see! What is it—a coal hole or the outer vestibule o' the infernal regions?"

"The Indians!" gasped Tom. "They may follow us."

"No, I reckon not, 'cause we closed the place up agen 'em, upset a big rock, me and Jack, and pinned a dozen on 'em under it. Then, just as we jumped back, another big boulder fell from the cliff above, and we had to dodge putty lively."

"Next we knowed, missing you boys, and not knowin' what had become of you, we went into a sort of cave up there, and the bottom fell out o' everything."

"But the sailor?" asked Tom. "Where is he?"

"Don't know, my lad, but where are we, anyhow?"

"We don't know, Bill. Under the ground somewhere. This is a cave, and it's warm and dry if not very light. Got anything with you to have supper on? We've got to take account of stock, I guess."

"Waal, I'll be blowed! You air level-headed, and no mistake. Yes, I got the pack I took with me from the camp of the Injuns."

"Then we are not so badly off," added Bert, "for we three have ours as well. Mine saved me from getting some bad bumps."

Fred had gathered fuel and the fire was now blazing away merrily, partly revealing the strange place in which the fugitives had found themselves.

The cave was from twelve to fifteen feet in height at the most, the roof being dome-shaped, the height at the walls being considerably less than in the center. It was irregular in shape, being circular in places, and then narrowing and forming a sort of corridor which led into a circular cave from which several diverging passages led off into the darkness. For the present the fugitives contented themselves with the larger chamber, having seen by a brief examination that the place was of considerable extent. As the fire blazed up more brightly, the quaint beauties of the singular place could be seen to more advantage, and all united in pronouncing it one of the strangest sights they ever witnessed. Sitting on the floor around the fire, for there were no boulders or stalagmitic formations in the cave, the party chatted merrily, while old Jack, who seemed to be the self-appointed cook, made ready the

meal which, for want of a better term, might be called breakfast, since they had not eaten anything for several hours. They ate with a relish and were not interrupted, Bill's declaration that the place was shut off from above being evidently correct.

After passing the night in the cave, they packed up their belongings the next morning and set out by the light of tallow candles to find their way out by some other opening. After proceeding some distance they felt a draught of air and also perceived a speck of light ahead of them. Going ahead they soon came out of the underground passage into a valley which was deep with snow.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A Novel Coasting Party.

Leaving the cave behind, they all set off down the valley in search of a way out. The snow lay deep on their path, but it was hard and firm, and there was no trouble in making their way over it. At last, after a long tramp over the snow, Tom espied a narrow path leading up at a point where two hills came together.

Struggling onward, now slipping, now breaking through the snow where the sun had shone more directly on it, toiling diligently on, the wanderers pressed upward and onward. Here a slanted tree offered them the means of drawing themselves higher, there a bare rock offered them a foothold, and now and again a well-defined path led them farther upon their way. Higher and still higher they progressed, fatigued and worn, but still persevering till at last, as night drew on, they found themselves on the top of one of the hills, overlooking a great level plain.

"Now we've got to get down again," said Bill. "It's comin' on night, and it looks kinder squally besides."

The wind began to howl around their heads and throw whirling clouds of fine, dry snow in their faces, while the sky had an angry look betokening a storm. Hardly had Bill spoken when Fred, turning his head to avoid a gust of wind, slipped, fell upon his back, and went whirling down the slope toward the plain below, with the speed of the wind.

"That's an idea!" cried Tom, and quickly unslinging the pack from his shoulders, he threw it upon the ground, sprang upon it, face downward, and went scurrying down the hill after Fred.

"Well, if two of them can do that, I don't see why the rest of us can't," said Bert, and using his pack as a sledge he sat upon it, pushed off, and went flying after the others.

Bill and Jack Hall imitated the example unwittingly set by Fred, and instantly followed Tom and Bert, and in another instant they were whizzing over the hard crust in the wake of the boys. It was certainly a novel way of settling the question of getting down, but its success seemed probable nevertheless. Fred had his pack under him, but now and then his heels would dig into the crust, retarding his progress. Once he was brought to a standstill in this manner. Quickly getting upon his feet, he unslung his pack, and as Bert went flying past him just then, he took a lesson from the young fellow, sat on his pack and continued the descent. Like lightning they sped on down the steep slope, the wind singing in

their ears, and all their nerves strung to the highest tension.

None of them would have attempted such a feat if it had been suggested to them, but Fred's accident gave Tom an instant cue which he lost no time in following. Down they sped, faster and faster every instant, and though none dared hope for success, no accident happened. The crust bore them, they escaped bare rocks, dwarfed trees and other obstructions, and in an incredibly short time had reached the plain, and at last came to a pause.

It was necessary to find a shelter at once, and all hands now hurried to the foot of the slope and, under an overhanging ledge of rock, found the very place they wanted. Here they remained all night, and in the morning set out for the vessel. Calculating their position by the sun, they discovered that the range of hills lay between them and the coast, and that they would have to go around or over them again in order to regain their lost ground.

"We're on the wrong side," said Tom, "and must go around."

"Yes, we can never cross the hills again," said Bert. "It was a wonder that we ever got down, as it was."

For several days they traveled on, hoping to get upon the other side of the range. They could not go many miles at a time, and often storms delayed them. It was necessary to make the most of their time, however, as their supplies were growing alarmingly low. It was now a week from the time they had left the vessel, and no doubt search had already been made for them. No one could have foreseen all that had happened, however, and the chances were small that any searching party would find them. They pushed on for several days longer, and at last one day as evening was approaching Tom cried out joyously:

"Look yonder! There is a shelter of some kind built against a great mound of rocks, and presently they beheld smoke issuing from it.

"There are men there; it is a searching party sent out to find us!" cried Bert. "Thank Heaven for that!"

The three boys dashed forward, unheeding the warnings which Bill had uttered. The old sailor and Jack Hall hurried after the boys, Bill muttering to himself:

"If it should be that feller, there's bound to be trouble if he sees Tom fust."

Suddenly, as the boys neared the hut which was seen to be built of the fragments of a boat, a mast, broken oars, a sail, and stones put loosely together, the figure of a man suddenly appeared. He was worn and haggard, wore a tangled beard, and had the look of a wild beast. Despite his changed appearance, the boys knew him at once. The man was Jack Grounder, Tom Cole's bitter enemy.

"Ha! So you've come to take me, have you?" he growled, drawing a knife from his belt. "We'll see whether you win or not," and with a fierce growl he leaped forward.

CHAPTER XIX.—Getting Nearer the Truth.

Tom threw up his rifle as a guard as Grounder sprang upon him. The man's knife struck the

barrel of the rifle, glanced along it, and caught against the trigger. The piece was discharged instantly, the bullet speeding just above Grounder's head. Instantly Bert and Fred sprang forward and forced the madman to retreat. He stood at the entrance of his wretched hut, glaring at the boys, and hissed fiercely:

"Don't you dare come a step nearer, for I will kill you all before I will be taken!"

"Nobody wants to take you, Joe Gunn," said Bill. "What has become of the rest of your party? Where are the two sailors?"

"I didn't kill 'em, I didn't; they went away, they left me; if they are dead, it's no fault of mine; I didn't kill 'em!" said Grounder hoarsely, glaring at the old sailor.

"What are you going to do yourself, Joe Gunn?" asked Bill. "You can't live out here in this desert. You'd better go back with us to the——"

"No, no; I'll never go back—never!" cried the wretched man in shrill tones. "Keep off, keep off, I say! I know what you want. I know what brings you here. You want to take me back to the ship to hang me, but you won't—you won't. I wasn't the only one; there were others; you can't hold me to blame for all. No—no, I won't go back, I won't, I won't. I'll—ha! Who's that?"

For the first time the man caught sight of Jack Hall.

"Do you know me, Jim Grapnell?" the recluse asked, coming forward.

"Ha, go away, go away; you are dead, you are a ghost! Keep away, keep away!" screamed Grounder, putting his hands before his pale and haggard face.

"I am the man whose life you blasted, whose——"

"No, no; it is a lie; it's a lie; I never saw you in all my life; you are not Jack Hall; I never wronged you; it's a lie; don't come near me; take him away; don't let him touch me!"

The cringing wretch, mad beyond a doubt, made so by his awakened conscience more than by his sufferings, shrunk back, and uttered the most piteous cries, Jack continuing:

"It would be no satisfaction to take your miserable life, Jack Grounder or Joe Gunn or Jim Grapnell, whatever you call yourself. A higher judge has already pronounced sentence upon you, and you had best make your peace with Him before it is too late."

"I don't know you, I never saw you before. I never knew Jack Hall; I never wronged you; take him away; don't let him touch me; he means to kill me; save me; don't let him harm me," groaned and screamed and begged the miserable creature as he clung to the old sailor.

"Bah! You make me blush to think there are such critters as you that calls themselves men!" cried Bill in disgust, casting the man from him.

Grounder retreated to the furthest corner of the miserable hovel and glared out upon the wanderers, crying in hoarse tones:

"You will never take me alive—touch me at your peril—I will resist to the last drop of my blood—I am innocent—I never tried to kill Tom Cole—I don't know Howard Worden—I never agreed to—Ha! keep away, I say, keep away, or blood will be shed! Keep away! Keep away!"

"Howard Worden!" gasped Tom. "Why, what does this wretch know of him? That is the name of my cousin, the man who——"

"I don't know him—I never heard of him—I never tried to kill Tom Cole—I never made a bargain—I never promised—" and with a scream and a hoarse cry more like that of a wild beast than a man, Grounder suddenly sprang up, rushed out of the cave, and ran swiftly out upon the frozen waste.

"What can the man mean?" mused Tom. "What can he have to do with Howard Worden? My cousin is a gentleman, and would not consort with a wretch like him."

"You are a cousin of Howard Worden, you said?" asked Bert.

"Yes."

"Was he ever an enemy of yours?"

"No, not that I can say."

"Would it be of advantage to him if you were out of the way?"

"Why, no, not that I am aware."

"You are closely related?"

"First cousins. My mother was sister to his father."

"Your mother is dead?"

"Yes, and my father as well."

"Was there any property which you would inherit from any one, and which would go to Howard Worden if you were dead?"

"I don't know; there was my mother's uncle, who was reputed wealthy, but I never knew just how much he had, and if he is still alive or not, I don't know."

"Well, there was evidently a bargain between this man and your cousin, by what he says, but whether we will ever learn what it is is a question."

"Well," growled Bill, "it's gettin' dark, and there's a storm brewin'. Here's a shelter, though it ain't none o' the best, and we've got to stay somewhere."

"All right; we'll take this," said Bert, "and if that wretch comes back we'll share it with him if he behaves himself."

There was a fire in an old iron pot in one corner of the hut, and to this Bill added fuel, and then prepared supper. They had a little dried meat left, some hardtack and coffee, and on this they were obliged to subsist, eating sparingly, so as to make their limited supplies last till they reached the vessel. There were provisions in the hut, but these they would not touch, shelter and a fire being all they would take from the miserable creature who had so lately fled. When it was quite dark and they all sat around the fire, huddled together to keep warm, the wind blowing fiercely without and sending the snow in huge drifts against the hut, they heard a voice outside in whining tones:

"Won't you let me come in?"

"Certainly, come in, it's your house," said Bill. "We put some fat on your fire, but you'll find your grub untouched. All we want is a place to stay for the night."

Grounder came creeping in like a miserable cur and sat in a far corner against the mud wall, drawing around him a torn blanket which he took out of some recess, and so he sat glaring at the fire and muttering incoherently to himself.

"Look here, Jack Grounder," said Bill at length,

"you know very well you're a mean, cowardly sneak and a mutineer and all that, but I want to tell yer it'll be better for yer in the long run to go back to the ship and stand yer trial like a man, 'stead o' stayin' out here in this desert to die of hunger and cold, as you're sure to."

"I'm an innocent man; they have lied about me!" whined Grounder.

"That's all the more reason why you should go back and clear things up. I'm down on ye, Joe Gunn, and I tell ye so honest, but I don't want to see even a cur like you die out here in this awful wilderness, and you will as sure as I sit here if you don't go back with us."

"You are all down on me; I won't stand no show," muttered Grounder, with a whine.

"We are all down on ye, for a fact, and they ain't no denyin' it, and it's yer own fault, as you know, but if ye want to have folks stick to yer you've got to act like a man and do the square thing. If you go back with us and show that you're honestly tryin' to do what's right, I won't say another word."

"Will you all agree to that?" whined Grounder, in a cringing tone that filled Tom with disgust.

"Yes," said the boys.

"Behave yourself and you're safe from us," said Tom. "Be a man, if you can."

"He can't," muttered Fred, under his breath. "It isn't in him."

"Then I'll go back," said Grounder. "I ain't such a bad man as you think. There's others worse'n I was, and you'll find——"

"Never mind that, Jack," said Bill, puffing vigorously at his pipe. "You won't do your own case no good by chuckin' mud at others. You've got our word that we won't do you no harm, and that ought to be enough."

"That's all right," said Grounder, drawing the blanket closer around him. "Could you give me a pipeful of tobacco? I haven't had a smoke in four days."

"To be sure, I will," and Bill tossed the man a piece cut from his plug, more than enough to fill a pipe.

CHAPTER XX.—The Motive Discovered.

It was very late, long past midnight, the storm beat pitilessly upon the wretched hut, the wind strove to tear it from its place and scatter it piecemeal over the plain, hungry wolves howled for their prey, and it was a time to try the stoutest heart. Now the snow would be piled high around and above the miserable hut, insuring comfort for those within, and again the unpitying wind would whirl the drifts away and threaten to carry hut, fugitives and all away with them. There had been little sleep for any one, although now and then the boys had dozed for a few minutes at a time, the noise of the tempest preventing them from sleeping soundly. At last the wind decreased in violence and the snow settled upon and all around the hut. The fire still burned in the center of the floor and diffused a welcome warmth through the place. Grounder, in a far-away corner, seemed to be fast asleep, and one by one the others dropped off. The cessation of the storm brought a relaxation of the vigilance of the watchers, and they composed themselves to sleep.

Tom did not mean to give way to drowsiness, for he seemed to feel that it was necessary for him to remain awake. He distrusted Grounder and meant to keep a watch upon the man. Little by little, however, his drowsiness gained control of him, till at last he sank to the floor utterly unconscious. Grounder had not been asleep, merely pretending to be so for purposes of his own. When all was quiet in the hut, he arose stealthily, drew his knife, and began making his way with great caution toward Tom's corner.

"I said I'd do it!" he hissed, "and I will. They shall never take me. I'll kill them all first, and that cub first of all!"

The fire had burned low by this time and there was very little light in the place. In crossing the open space, Grounder struck Bert's outstretched foot and stumbled.

"Curse the luck!" he muttered, and then looked stealthily around him.

There was no sound except the steady breathing of the sleepers. Grasping his knife firmly, the man made his way to where Tom lay and bent over him.

"Now to settle him and then serve the rest the same way!" he hissed.

At that instant Fred moved in his sleep and uttered a cry. Grounder paused and glanced around. The fire burned up brightly for an instant, fanned by some draught from without, and the light shone in Jack Hall's face. Grounder, satisfied that no one was awake, turned to Tom again and raised his arm. At that moment the recluse awoke, aroused by the light. He raised his head and saw Grounder about to strike Tom.

"Murderer!" he shrieked, springing up.

"Ha! too late!" hissed Grounder, striking a savage blow at the sleeping boy.

At the instant Tom rolled over upon the floor. Grounder's knife struck the ground and was snapped in two. In an instant Jack Hall was upon him.

"Now, then, scoundrel, take the punishment for your crimes!"

He seized Grounder by the throat and held him in a deathlike grasp. Still holding the broken knife, Grounder struggled to free himself and struck savagely at his assailant. The blow was only too well aimed. The jagged blade penetrated the old man's side, passed between two ribs, and pierced the heart. Jack Hall fell forward with a gasp, tightening his hold upon Grounder's throat. In a moment Tom awoke, saw what had happened, and uttered a shrill cry of alarm. The others sprang to their feet at once. Jack Hall was dead, but his fingers had closed in a viselike grip upon the murderer's throat. It was impossible to release them then, and it was useless as well. Jack Grounder was dead.

"The villain!" muttered Bill. "I had no business to go to sleep! I might have known I couldn't trust him."

They guessed what had happened when they drew out the broken knife. The point of the blade was found in the ground close to where Tom had lain when he awoke. By degrees the deadly grasp of Jack Hall's fingers relaxed, and the bodies were laid side by side in a corner of the cave. Grounder's body was searched and in one of his pockets was found a folded letter.

"Ha!" said Bert, unfolding the paper and hold-

ing it to the light. "This gives us the very clue we seek."

"Read it," said Fred.

In the dead silence which followed, Bert read the letter which, as he said, explained everything.

"New York, Dec. 17, 1890.

"Dear Jack:—I have a job for you—one that will pay you well—and, knowing you to be unscrupulous, have concluded to intrust it to you. My cousin, Tom Cole, intends to sail with the Peary Expedition in June next. You must go with him. If he never returns I inherit a fortune, which otherwise goes to him, there being no other heirs. If you will see to it that he never returns, I will give you for your share five thousand dollars. The money will be yours upon showing me proofs of Tom's death. I leave the rest to you, and if you are wise you will act accordingly.

"HOWARD WORDEN."

For a few moments after Bert had finished reading the letter there was silence. Then Tom spoke.

"I would not have believed it," he said. "Hire a man to put me to death, so that he might be rich! Why, I don't want the fortune and never expect it. He is welcome to it."

There was no more sleep for the fugitives the rest of the night. In the morning the hut was found to be buried deep in snow and the storm still raging. It would have been madness to attempt to go out, and they decided to wait until the storm had ceased. The bodies of the two dead men, the murderer and his Nemesis, were placed in the snow, just outside the door of the hut, as it was too uncanny to have them inside with the living.

All that day and the next the storm continued, and the little party remained prisoners. At last it ceased, and they were free to go out. Where to go was the next question. They made bundles of all their supplies, and then, leaving the two bodies of their unfortunate companions in the hut, they closed the place against all intruders and started off upon their almost hopeless journey in search of the coast.

CHAPTER XXI.—Out of the Storm.

Day after day they plodded on, each day showing them weaker and less able to struggle against fate. Their stock of provisions grew alarmingly small, and every day brought them nearer to the time when they would be without the means of sustaining life. At last, when nearly out of everything, they reached the coast. With scarcely strength enough to stand left to them, they built a hut of snow and ice on the shore and awaited their fate. One day passed, two, three, and a fourth dawned. There was not food enough to last another day, and the alcohol had given out. At noon they went into their miserable hut to partake of the last remnants of food they possessed.

"The Lord help us all," muttered Bill, as they finished their meal, scanty and insufficient, "for it won't take more'n a few hours to finish us if help don't come soon."

Fred gave a great sob, Bert buried his face in his hands and Tom ran outside to hide his emo-

tions. Suddenly, as he turned his gaze mechanically out over the ice-laden waters, his heart arose to his mouth and he became speechless. There, not a dozen cables' lengths distant, was a bark under full sail, beating down the channel. The vessel was a whaling bark, the last of the fleet to remain in the Arctic, and even now bound for warmer seas. The bark was hailed and a boat put out for shore. The boys and Bill were taken on board, snatched from death at the very moment that the clouds seemed to be closing in upon them. The bark had delayed her return long after all the other whalers had departed, having struck a fresh school of whales, and her captain, desiring to fill up, if possible, and but for that the boys must have perished. As it was, the whaler ran a great risk, and narrowly escaped being nipped and having to remain all the winter in the ice. Nothing was seen of the Kite, nor of any of her men, and Tom concluded that she had either gone further north or had found some landlocked harbor where she was waiting in safety the breaking up of the ice. The voyage was a long one, for the bark was only a sailing vessel, and not a fast one at that, and there were many delays. At last the voyage came to an end, and the boys found themselves in New Bedford.

Fred's home was not far distant, and Bill found a chance to ship as a cook on a vessel that was to sail in a few days. Tom and Bert, after taking leave of their friends, went at once to New York to report their arrival, and tell all that they knew about the Peary expedition to the government officials. Upon the day of their arrival Bert read in one of the papers the news of the sudden death of one Howard Worden, a wealthy ship owner, and the supposed heir to the possessions of a grand uncle worth millions.

"It is the judgment of Heaven," said Bert, as he finished reading the item to Tom. "You will have no further use for this paper, so I will destroy it and put an end to the matter forever."

He had taken the folded letter from his pocket, and he now held it to the flame of the fire in the grate, and then threw it on the coals and watched it till nothing remained but crisp, black ashes.

"There is now no reason why you shouldn't take the fortune which belongs to you," he added, when the paper was destroyed, "and I know that you will put it to better use than the writer of this letter would have done."

The fortune was not so great as had been stated, but it was enough to keep Tom comfortable for the rest of his life, and he had no trouble in proving his claim to it. There were surprises all around when Peary returned from his expedition to the north. He had not discovered the North Pole, but he had brought Tom's sweetheart home with him, and the reunion between the lovers was full of happiness. The sailor who had been with the boys and the two that had gone with Grounder had returned, but the boys had been supposed dead until they were seen on the wharf when the Kite arrived. Tom has given up the sea and is soon to marry Jennie Hall, and Bert and Fred, whenever they see him, often talk over the many strange adventures they had while Out With Peary.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY PRAIRIE COURIER; or, GENERAL CUSTER'S YOUNGEST AIDE."

CURRENT NEWS

NEWARK, 415,609, LEADS CINCINNATI

Newark, largest city in New Jersey, with a population of 415,609, has outstripped Cincinnati, which ranked it in the last census. Cincinnati's population, recently announced, is 401,158.

Newark ranked as the fourteenth city in 1910, with a population of 347,569, an increase of 101,390 over its 1900 population. Washington, sixteenth city ten years ago, now outranks both Cincinnati and Newark, with a population of 437,414.

Since the first Federal census was recorded in 1840, Newark has had a steady and substantial growth. Its smallest percentage before this census was 29.9, during the decade ending in 1880.

AGED SMOKER QUILTS

Reaching the conclusion, after careful deliberation, that tobacco was injurious, Emanuel Crites of Pana, Ill., aged ninety, has given it up after constant use for seventy-one years.

He was first inducted into the fascinations of the weed when a schoolboy and has been loyal to it until now. He noted with concern that many of the companions of his youth, also devotees at the nicotine shrine, had been shuffling off this mortal coil, and decided that if he wished to reach a good old age it was imperative that he swear off.

Since reaching this decision he finds that his health has improved, he sleeps well, enjoys his food and also has more money in his pocket.

WISE RATS

Investigators of mining conditions and the peculiar dangers to which miners are subjected recently have taken much interest in the practice of Western gold miners to make pets of the rats which commonly infest mines. On the mother lode vein of California it has been found that the miners invariably feed the rats and take care of them, believing that the rodents are a source of protection against accidents. This is due, the men say, to the instinct of the rats, which warns them when a tunnel is unsafe. And when the rats leave a tunnel, it is almost impossible to get the miners to work there. This recalls the belief among sailors that rats will leave a doomed ship. The miners also have found that rats are much more susceptible than humans to the dangerous gases that so often cause loss of life in the mines. Long before the miners themselves are affected by these gases the rats become sick and show symptoms of distress. So the men keep close watch on the rats' good health.

INDIANS GO BACK TO TEPEES

Indians living in Maine will make their homes this summer on land which was the abode of their ancestors 230 years ago. As part of the Maine Centennial Celebration, tribes of Penobscots and Passamaquoddys will dwell at Derring Oaks, which has been occupied by palefaces since September 21, 1689. English settlers took possession then after a conflict with the redskins.

The centennial committee will establish villages at Derring Oaks typical of the original tribal

settlements. Wigwams beneath the great oaks will shelter the sole survivors of the powerful tribes that have passed to the happy hunting ground. On a nearby stream they will paddle their canoes. Many white visitors are expected to mingle with the braves, squaws and papooses, making a scene not unlike that of two centuries ago, except for the absence of firewater and an occasional clash.

COUNTERFEIT BILL PASSER CAUGHT

Policeman John B. Halpin was shot in the right side the other afternoon by Charles Duland, forty-one, of New York City in a running revolver battle just after Duland had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill in a State Street store, Bridgeport, Conn. Hundreds of persons joined in the chase. Bullets knocked chips from buildings on the main street of Bridgeport and one punctured the gasoline tank of an automobile, bring the car to a stop and blocking traffic.

Although wounded, Policeman Halpin succeeded in capturing Duland, turned the prisoner over to another officer and then collapsed. He was taken to the hospital. He will recover.

When Duland was taken to Police Headquarters he was found to have a sheaf of spurious twenty-dollar bills and several fifty-dollar bills. The bill he passed in the store was made by pasting together two photographs, with fine hairs in between, the whole bill then being tinted with green ink.

Duland said he bought the bills from a man on Long Island and had been passing them in many Eastern cities for several weeks.

BEARS STEAL HONEY

For the second time within a period of three years Axel McCracken, of Highland, Pa., has been robbed of his wild honey by the unexpected visit of a bear. Three years ago this coming fall McCracken had removed a quantity of honey from the trunk of a tree, and after placing the honey in a boiler he started for his home, but on the way he met a big black bear. Dropping the boiler of honey, McCracken started for his home on the run, and when he returned the following day found that bruin had devoured all of his honey.

This year ill-fortune again struck McCracken. While he was engaged in removing some rich wild honey from the trunk of a fallen tree in the vicinity of Bear Creek a big bear made his appearance. McCracken, dumbfounded, watched the bear until it was within a distance of about thirty feet of him. Then he decided to make a quick getaway. About the same time the bruin scented the honey and started on the run for the tree which contained the honey.

When McCracken returned the following day he found that the bear had not only eaten the honey that he had placed in two pails, but tore the trunk of the tree to splinters and secured the honey remaining in the tree.

BOB, THE ICE KING

— OR —

OUT TO FIND THE POLE

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVIII. (continued)

And such was the character of the man into whose hands poor Thyra had fallen.

A night of terrible anxiety followed, as may be well believed.

But the poor girl felt that she had much to be thankful for when Larson gave her a little room in one corner of his hut, where she was left to herself until morning.

The man had been bred a gentleman in his way, and he treated Thyra with all courtesy next day.

"I am staying here for a couple of weeks to give the dogs a good rest before making my final dash for the Pole," he explained. "This is my third trip up here. This hut was built and provisioned two years ago, and I have another outside in which there are more supplies. I am going to win out in this Polar game!"

After breakfast the Esquimaux started for the other hut to bring down certain things which were needed.

Larsen went part way with them and for the first time Thyra found opportunity to talk with Sandy.

But they were not allowed to leave the hut.

The doctor's double stood guard at the door.

If he could hear he showed it by no sign. Speak he certainly could not.

Thyra had asked Larson who he was, and the answer had been that he was a sailor picked up at Upernavik to act as a servant and all-around heelper.

He knew him only as "Henry," and of his history he knew nothing.

But there he stood now with folded arms, Dr. Ike's very double in his suit of furs.

What could it mean?

CHAPTER XIX.

IN HOT PURSUIT.

Just as before, Ike pulled himself together on the instant, and almost before Bob could do anything to help he was on his feet again.

"What happened? Did I keel over again?" he asked.

"That's what you did," replied Bob. "You ought to take something for this sort of thing if you have got anything with you which will help."

"Take nothing. It's all mental, dear boy. But it is over now, and I'm a new man. Happier than I have been for years."

"You saw something down there, doctor," ventured Bob.

"Bob, I did, and you shall see too. Take the glass, and have your look. See those two men

coming back towards the hut? Look, quick, before they go inside."

Bob caught up the glass and had his look. The moon was at its full, the aurora made it almost as bright as day.

"Why, one of those men seems to be your double!" he exclaimed.

"Ah!" replied Ike, drawing a long breath. "You think so?"

"As near as I can see."

"Thank Heaven that you do see it so, Bob!"

"And you?"

"Oh, I was afraid I was letting my imagination run away with me, but if you see it as I do, then that settles it. Bob, that man is my twin brother."

"It does not surprise me to hear you say so, now that I have seen his face. Of course, he is the mysterious party."

"That's right. That man was born to misfortune, Bob. Some day I'll tell you the whole story. Enough to say now that he is rather simple minded, and is deaf and dumb. I have been searching for him for several years."

"And it was that which brought you to the Arctic?"

"Yes, because I heard of such a man at St. Johns Newfoundland. When I got there I heard he had gone to Greenland. When I got to Upernavik I learned that such a man had gone north with Lars Larsen. I thought I could overtake him, and as no other way of going ahead offered than to buy a big rowboat and hire two Esquimos I did that. We reached Larsen's first camp too late. He had gone on. I tried to prevail upon the Esquimos to follow. They pretended to consent, and we went ahead a short distance. At the place where you found me I went ashore to stretch my legs, and traveled out of sight of the boat. When I got back I found that the rascals had deserted me, leaving only my banjo and grip. If you had not come along as you did, Bob, I should have perished. And that's my little story. Hardly worth the telling, but such as it is you have it now."

"Not all," said Bob.

"No, not all, but enough for the present, and now let us drop it. We have got to get down to business. Thyra and Sandy must be seen. We must get them away from these people if they want to come, as of course they do."

"And it is a matter of life or death for ourselves," replied Bob, quietly.

"Even so."

Ike took the glass again, and remained silent for some little time, but it is doubtful if he could make out much more than Bob could see with his own two eyes.

Clearly preparations were being made for a start down there at Lars Larsen's camp.

The dogs were being harnessed, and the sleds loaded up.

"Ike!" cried Bob. "It is now or never with us. If we delay they will be gone. Stand back against the rocks, please."

"Hold on! What would you do, you rash boy?"

"Jump that break and put back the bridge."

"You can never do it."

(To Be Continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

AMERICANS KILL GIANT CANNIBALS

Chester Ober, geographer with the expedition of Dr. Alexander H. Rice in South America, in a letter received by his parents at Newport, said that two natives were killed by Dr. Rice and Ober in warding off an attack on the party.

Ober described the natives as "cannibals, scantily clad," and as "very ferocious and of large stature."

The letter told of the trip up the Amazon River to the Negro, and thence up a tributary of the latter river, where the attack occurred. The attacking party leaped from the brush on the river bank toward the explorers and were frightened away by the party firing shots in the air.

The natives apparently took ambush, Ober said, because later they made another attack. Ober wrote that he and Rice fired at them this time, killing two. On the advice of guides the expedition turned back.

Accompanying Dr. Rice is his wife, the former Mrs. George D. Widener, of Philadelphia. According to Ober's father, the party is on its way back to the United States, and expects to arrive on May 15. They left this country last June to explore parts of South America unknown to the white race.

FLOORS YIELD GOLD

The time honored gold miner's term for gold ore, or auriferous gravel in placer diggings, is "pay dirt." This desirable material is found not only in the Golden West, but knowing jewelry manufacturers "strike it rich" right here in Manhattan. Maiden Lane district gold mining prospects are in jewelry factory floors, which yield platinum, gold and silver.

These metals are also extracted from dentists' refuse and from the sweepings of gold beaters, bookbinders, pottery decorators, picture frame and mirror manufacturers.

Few manufacturing firms melt their own sweeps. In the '70's none of the manufacturers thought of covering their shop floors with either tar felting or linoleum, and the floors were of pine wood, with open cracks between the boards. When a manufacturer moved he requisitioned a refiner to superintend the ripping up of the floors, and these sometimes yielded many thousands of dollars.

Julius Wodiska, the jewel expert, relates an experience of his own. From 1879 to 1885 he had a factory at No. 64 Fulton street, over the store of an exterminator of rats and other vermin, who owned the building. In the summer of 1884 a shrewd gold refiner, who knew the large amount of precious metals handled in Mr. Wodiska's place, told the landlord that any time the jeweler moved, he, the refiner, would pay the rat catching landlord \$300 for the privilege of taking up and relaying the floor of the jewelry factory. The landlord notified Wodiska that on the 1st of the month his rent would be doubled. Wodiska refused to pay and said he would move. The landlord was more than pleased. But Mr. Wo-

diska moved on April 1st and during that month he had the floor carefully torn up and every square inch of it and the space below it scraped. In vain the landlord protested and threatened a lawsuit. Before his lease expired Mr. Wodiska had replaced the old floor, and he was quite astonished at the large amount of gold his refiner returned to him after the scrapings and dirt had been put through a furnace.

BREEDING FROGS

William Waddington is the possessor of six large tracts of land in the Illinois bottoms on the Mississippi River, a little south of St. Louis, and has dealt extensively in the frog business. Much of those bottom lands are marshy and swampy and unfitted for agricultural purposes.

Many years ago Mr. Waddington conceived the idea of "frog farming," and after cleaning up the swamp lands with the improved scrapers and inclosing several hundred acres with a strong wire fence and otherwise beautifying the ground surrounding these marshy places, he soon became the possessor of a huge frog farm.

Convinced that he had the grounds and the fresh spring water, he was determined to experiment in the breeding, raising and selling of the delicious amphibious animals. He made a trip to Paris and there investigated the propagating and handling of this palatable luxury. He made arrangements to have shipped to him twenty-five French bulls and seventy-five female frogs, which landed in good order and condition at St. Louis. From there they were conveyed to his froggery in the Illinois bottoms and turned loose to roam over the placid waters that sparkled far and wide.

In less than a year the foreign stock had completely driven the native breed from the swamps and he was shipping the "French" article to St. Louis and Chicago. He had a contract with several packing and slaughtering houses for the offal, which was hauled to the different froggeries. Stale bread and broken crackers were also used in feeding, besides the innumerable insects and water wiggins that abound in such damp and marshy districts. It was a sight to see thousands of these frogs jumping to their accustomed places at feeding time. They were fed twice a day. When the first came into the market they sold as high as \$2 per dozen, but the price fluctuated according to the demand, but would average \$1 per dozen through the season.

During the winter months they would disappear by burying themselves in the mud along the outer edge of the lake or swamp. It requires a French frog about three months to mature—that is to say, large enough to market, but they become full grown at the age of six months, while the American frog requires fully eight months, and then is not more than three-quarters the size of the French animal—the latter a most beautiful yellowish-green color, with golden spots all over his body.

The Midnight Shadow

— OR —

THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STEPS

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIX. (continued)

"It was owned and occupied for years by the Dykeman family," replied Overman. "A New York party by the name of Goldstein owns it now. He is holding the property for a rise. That was why he was willing to rent it for a year."

"Where are these rooms you speak of?"

"In the extension. This way. I can hardly believe there is anyone here now. I don't hear a sound."

"We shall soon know. Lead on, but let us go quietly."

They went down a long passage and came to a certain door.

"It is this room and the one adjoining where I had the furniture put," said Overman. He put out his hand as though to open the door.

But before he could touch the knob the door suddenly flew open and there stood the Midnight Shadow.

He was dressed now in a well-worn business suit, and he had an old cap on his head.

With a strange, animal-like cry he darted out through the door, swinging one of his long arms to the right, and the other to the left.

Dick Ketchum got a stunning blow in the face which sent him tumbling on his back. Overman got it, too, and fell sprawling.

Oliver jumped out of the way just in time, while the Shadow, repeating the cry, ran down the hall, turned into a cross corridor and vanished.

"After him, Oliver!" cried Dick, from the floor. "I'm with you, boy! He must not escape!"

CHAPTER XX.

Fanny Falls into Bad Hands.

And so Arthur Grady still lived!

But Fanny knew nothing of that.

The poor girl fell into trouble even worse than that which the Midnight Shadow had made for her after the accident which left her alone in the boat.

Fanny could not swim, and as it happened, this was the first time she had ever been in a rowboat in her life.

Thus her fear and anxiety were great.

And the boat drifted on and on.

Of course Fanny had no idea which way the movement of the tide was taking her.

Like hundreds of other girls in New York, Fanny had never been up Long Island Sound. She knew nothing about it. Even if it had been daylight she could not have located her position.

Bad as the situation had seemed before, she

now heartily wished that Henry Grady and Arthur were back again.

Truth told, Fanny was so ignorant that she actually thought there was danger of her drifting out to sea.

As time advanced and she quieted down, Fanny began to wonder what was in the two big grips and the dress suit case.

The latter was locked, and was fearfully heavy, but the two grips were merely fastened with their straps.

Fanny opened one, and found that it contained clothes.

As she had nothing else to do, she unpacked it.

Then came a discovery.

There was a box in one side under the clothes.

It was just a little pasteboard box which had once held spool cotton, and it was secured by an elastic band.

Fanny opened it, and found that it was filled with glittering gems of all colors, with several which appeared to be diamonds among them.

Under any other circumstances Fanny might have imagined these stones to be fakes, but finding them in Henry Grady's grip, she could not doubt for an instant that they were all genuine and very valuable.

Restoring them to the grip, she repacked it and strapped it.

Then she tackled the other.

In one side was Arthur's blue suit and other articles of clothing, which looked as if they might have belonged to the idiot.

But in the other side were great bundles of greenbacks and yellowbacks of large denominations.

It was too dark to do any counting, but Fanny saw that there must be a great deal of money in the bag.

And now she fell to wondering what was in the dress suit case, but she could not get it open, try as she would.

Thoroughly exhausted with all she had passed through, it is not strange that at last Fanny fell asleep.

How long Fanny slept she never knew; when she finally awoke, to her great joy, she discovered that the boat had drifted into a little cove and was bumping against the rocks.

Fanny lost not an instant in getting ashore, you may depend.

The movement sent the boat out of her reach.

"Oh, dear me! Now all that money and those jewels will be lost!" gasped Fanny. "What can I do?"

She could do nothing but wait for the boat to drift in again, and this it did after a few minutes.

Fanny seized hold and managed with great exertion to drag it up on the sloping ledge, where for the time being, at least, it would be safe. This done, she started to explore.

Behind her was a low bank, which she climbed.

It was all woods here, and there was no road that she could see.

(To Be Continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

RAILROAD PROTECTS BABY ROBINS

A pair of robins built their nest in a freight car and just as the brood was hatched the order came to send the car on to Chicago. The yard men, after consultation, telegraphed the situation to headquarters, and the order came instantly to sidetrack the car till the babies were able to leave the nest.

18 CENTS FOR ONE POTATO

It is a far cry from the old time grocer who used to place a potato on the spout of his customer's kerosene can as a stopper to the grocer who sells a single potato for eighteen cents. A potato weighing two pounds was sold in Muncie, Ind., by Clarence E. Frees, a grocer, for that amount. It cost him sixteen cents, so he believes he is not a profiteer. Muncie housewives in many neighborhoods have established an 'unorganized boycott' on potatoes, and many restaurants have stopped serving them with dinner orders.

A NOVEL MAIL ROUTE

The most picturesque rural mail route in Oregon is a 30-mile stretch of the Rogue River, which empties into the Pacific near the State's southern boundary. A motorboat is the carrier's "mail wagon," and in it he makes the 60-mile journey every other day. Wooden uprights at the river's edge hold the mail boxes. To make this non-stop delivery possible the year around, the carrier's clientele obligingly move the posts farther into the stream during summer-time's low water, and back again during the floods of spring.

SQUIRRELS BIG AS CATS

There is no country that can rival North America for the great number of squirrels, both species and subspecies, represented in her fauna. In so far as brilliancy of color and size are concerned, however, says the American Forestry Magazine of Washington, the handsomest and largest squirrels in the world are found in the Orient and the East Indies. Along the coast of Malabar is found a squirrel as big as an ordinary cat. This animal is bright red on the upper part of its body, offset by the most intense black, while all the lower parts are of a clear yellow.

MOTORCYCLIST BRAVES DEATH VALLEY

An achievement that is unequaled in motoring history was performed this month by John E. Hogg of Los Angeles when in the interests of three large railroad companies he made a tour of Death Valley on a middleweight machine. The trip, which is a hazardous one at any time of the year, because of the utter absence of distinguishable trails, the great distance between water holes and prowling packs of coyotes, was accomplished by Hogg and his little machine without a single mishap. He covered over 800 miles on the floor of Death Valley itself, which is the greatest depression on the face of the earth, with the exception of the Dead Sea region in Palestine.

HOW RUGS BECOME "ANTIQUE"

How "genuine antique rugs" are manufactured and prepared for European markets and American markets is told by an American who visited Bagdad. The shopping streets seem like tunnels. They are arched overhead with brick to keep out the heat; thus they run, like subways, up and down the bazar quarter. Through those long, stifling, faintly lighted tunnels throng the eternal crowd of men, mules and camels. Often one will see a fine rug lying flat in the filth of a narrow street, ground beneath the tramp of men and beasts, but there is method in this. Foreigners make Oriental rugs, bright and new, in Persia and sell them through Bagdad. Since an "old rug" is worth more, wily brokers have hit on this way to make a new rug look old.

LIVED OVER 114 STICKS OF DYNAMITE 11 YEARS

John O'Rielly, of 22 Carson Street, Dorchester section of Boston, learned that he has lived for eleven years and brought up his family in a house built over 114 sticks of dynamite. But nothing happened and now nothing ever will, as the stuff has been discovered and carried away. O'Rielly says it is too late to be scared now, but his wife and four children were victims of an attack of "nerves."

O'Rielly was digging an excavation for a foundation under the L of his house when the shovel struck into a rotted board about thirty inches below the surface. Prying it up, the collection of dynamite sticks, each about six inches long and packed in sawdust was exposed.

State explosive expert Walter Wedger declared it the largest lot of dynamite ever discovered in one place in his experience. How it came there is a mystery. A widow lived in the house before the O'Riellys moved in.

GIANT DINOSAURUS STOLEN

Who stole the great Patagonian dinosaur? This is a question the newspapers are asking and it is also a question which Dr. Carlos Ameghino, Director of the Buenos Ayres Museum of Natural History, would like to have answered.

The dinosaur, or rather its skeleton, was stolen from the soil of Patagonia, near Neuquen, where it was discovered by English engineers a year ago. Dr. Ameghino at his own expense, sent an expedition in charge of a young naturalist, Augusto Tapia, to bring the skeleton to Buenos Ayres.

"The English engineers," says Dr. Ameghino, "informed Tapia that while they were on a trip of exploration an unknown person had come to the place, collected all the fossils and taken away those which interested him, including the dinosaur."

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JUNE 2, 1920.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

DIES DIGGING GRAVE

Charles Houchens, grave digger, dropped dead while digging the grave of his lifelong friend, John Andrews, who recently was killed in an accident at Lima, Ohio, recently. The two men will be buried beside each other.

WHISKY IN BRICKS

Indications that whisky is being sent into Oregon in bottles concealed in the middle of cement bricks were brought to the attention of the police at Portland, Ore., when a man who refused to give his name turned such a brick over to the authorities. The man said he had thrown the brick in a pile of burning rubbish. There was a slight explosion and he saw flame shoot forth from the interior of the brick. When the fire died down he discovered the bottle in the brick.

KILLED BEAR WITH AXE

Sidney Aldous, a mountain rancher of Alma, in the western part of Lane County, Ore., killed a big black bear with an axe a few days ago. He and his brother, J. W. Aldous, were hunting raccoons. Sidney carried an axe. An outcry among their dogs in some brush caused Sidney to investigate. He found the dogs had treed a bear. His brother had gone on with his rifle, so Sidney waited at the foot of the tree and when the bear began to descend the dogs seized it and Aldous despatched it with a blow on the skull.

DO NOT WANT TO BE RAILROADERS

Cheyenne, Wyo., is a "railroad" town, perhaps 50 per cent. of its population being directly or indirectly dependent for their daily cake on the railroads entering the city, yet there is not a single juvenile Cheyennette, so far as the Chamber of Commerce has been able to ascertain, who is ambitious to become a railroad man. Replies to several hundred questionnaires sent by the chamber to Cheyenne boys reveal desire among the youngsters to become nearly everything else but railroad men. The situation is regarded as remarkable, inasmuch as the railroad class of the city's population perhaps draws wages considerably higher on the average than any other wage-earning class.

APPROVES SUNDAY FUN

Salina, Kan. possesses a preacher whom every angler in Kansas can praise.

He is Rev. Arthur Dillinger, pastor of the First Christian Church, and he believes it is all right for a man to go fishing on Sunday, provided he first goes to church.

"I fail to see where we get the idea that the man or boy who goes fishing on Sunday is bound straight for the warm place," Dillinger says. "It doesn't say so in the Good Book, and for my part I think there is not as much harm sitting on the bank of some quiet stream fishing as there is in rushing over the road at a high rate of speed in an automobile and burning up good money for gasoline.

"We have worked up a lot of useless theories," he declares, "about the observance of the Sabbath and this idea about never going fishing or indulging in any other legitimate enjoyment on Sunday afternoons after the church worship in the morning is one of them."

LAUGHS

He—When Smith got married they went straight away in their new motor car. She—Oh! Where did they spend their honeymoon? He—In the hospital.

"I get a penny every time I take my cod liver oil." "What do you do with them?" "Mother puts 'em in a money box till there's enough, and then buys another bottle of cod liver oil."

She—How far can your ancestry be traced? He—Well, when my grandfather resigned his position as cashier of a country bank, they traced him as far as China, but he got away.

Mrs. Brickrow (after the annual moving)—"The family who last lived in this house left it in a perfectly horrible condition." Mr. Brickrow—"The agent told me it has stood empty ever since we lived in it before."

Prosecuting Attorney—"Your Honor, the bull pup has gone and chewed up the court Bible." Judge—"Well, make the witness kiss the bull pup, then. We can't adjourn court for a week just to hunt up a new Bible.

The Kind Old Gentleman—What's the matter, my little man? The Little Boy—Boo—ooh! I'm so c—c—c—old. The Kind Old Gentleman—Well, why don't you go indoors? The Little boy—'Cos muvver says she'll warm me if I does.

A well-known society young man recently shocked one of his lady friends by his ignorance of history. It was after a dinner party at his house, and she was telling him what she had learned in his private history class. One thing led to another, and all the time he was getting into deeper water. At last she surprised him by inquiring: "Now, tell me, Mr. —, what are the Knights of the Bath?" He stammered for awhile, and finally blurted out: "Why, Saturday nights, I suppose."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

CHECK BLOWN ACROSS SIX COUNTIES

Following a recent severe windstorm Anthony Gase, a farmer living near Fostoria, O., found in a field a check that had been blown across parts of six counties from Greenville, O. The counties were Darke, Shelby, Auglaize, Allen, Hardin, Hancock and Seneca. He returned it to the Greenville Bank and received a letter of thanks.

ANCIENT CHINESE POTTERY AS AN INDUSTRY

An authority on Chinese porcelain is responsible for the statement that it would be possible to produce such work to-day at the King Ta-chan potteries as in the days of Kang Hsi, although the cost would be practically prohibitive, and the coloring could not be duplicated, as the mineral coloring matter used is dug from mines in which the chemical components vary with the depth. It is said that the old molds, patterns, and designs are still in existence, and that clay such as was used for the old ware is obtainable.

WORLD'S BIGGEST CATARACT

Niagara Falls is not the greatest cataract in the world. The greatest cataract is said to be on the Ignazu River, which partly separates Brazil and Argentina.

The precipice over which the river plunges is 210 feet high, that of Niagara being 167 feet. The cataract is 13,123 feet wide, or about two and a half times as wide as Niagara.

It is estimated that 100,000,000 tons of water pass over Niagara in one hour. A like estimate gives the falls of Ignazu 140,000,000 tons.

LEATHER FROM THE SEA

Considerable interest is at present being shown in the possibility of utilizing the skins of sharks and porpoises for the making of shoe leather. The Bureau of Standards has completed arrangements to test the comparative durability of upper leather made from shark and porpoise skins as compared with that from calfskin and cowhide. The co-operation of the National Boot and Shoe Manufacturers' Association has been secured in the making of the necessary shoes for the test. It is believed that the results of this investigation will be watched with considerable interest.

EMERGENCY LIGHTS

A German firm has recently produced an automatic system of emergency lighting suitable for factories, theatres, public buildings in general, and so on. The emergency lamp is supplied by a storage battery and is connected in such a manner that it operates when the main supply current fails. A relay brings the storage battery into operation. The lamp may be switched on or off at will, but the relay resumes its operation as soon as the main supply is re-established. The storage battery is permanently supplied with a small charging current as long as the emergency lamp is switched off.

HIGHEST TELEPHONE SYSTEM IN THE WORLD

According to the Telephone Engineer, G. D. E. Mortimer, a mining engineer of Point Loma, Cal., claims to have the highest telephone system in the world, the installation being at an altitude of 15,500 feet above sea level. This telephone system is located at Sonata, Bolivia, South America, where the installation of a telephone system for a certain mining company, between various parts of the mine and the town of Yani, has just been completed. The total length of the line is 10 1-2 miles, the installation being at an altitude of 15,500 feet.

RAG PICKER YIELDS \$10,000

Max Spiegel, a rag picker of Chicago, was arrested at the request of his wife because he told her he was going back to Russia where he could get a drink. She did not know anything of his financial condition except they were very poor and lived miserably.

The police searched Spiegel and in the lining of his cap, coat, trousers, boots, shirt and vest they found layers and layers of soiled, ragged old \$10 bills. The poor rag picker's fortune consisted of about \$10,000.

Judge Newcomer took charge of his affairs. He ordered \$6,000 placed in the bank under a joint account, so Mrs. Spiegel could draw what money she needed, the rest, he declared, should be invested in a mortgage. "You stay here and take care of your family," he said to Spiegel.

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Employees
Get Half

The National Cash Register Company, employing approximately 7,000 persons in its plant here, lately announced a fifty-fifty profit sharing plan for employees for 1920. Only employees in the Dayton plant of the company will share in the profits.

John H. Patterson, president of the company, announced that the profits of the company would be determined by outside accountants, and that after the net profits had been determined, an amount equal to 6 per cent. interest on the company's investment would be deducted. The remaining profits, the statement said, will be divided into two equal shares, 50 per cent. to the company and 50 per cent. to be divided among the employees. Profits to be distributed among the employees will be divided into two parts, half to executives and foremen and half to other employees.

The plan, it was announced, will cover the year beginning with January 1. Payments will be made July 1 and December 31. No employee will receive profits unless he has been in the employ of the company for six months or more.

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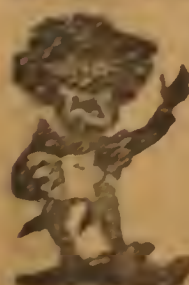
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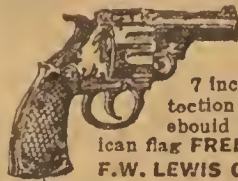
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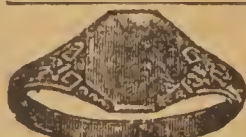
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